



Window on Jordan

Quizzes and prizes: It's the Ramadan marketing bonanza

By a Star Staff Writer
NOW THAT the holy month of Ramadan is over, many Jordanians will begin the long wait. They will be waiting for the announcement of the winners of the tens of Ramadan quizzes, puzzles and competitions that were launched by newspapers, television and radio stations among others.

Ramadan is the Arab world's answer to Christmas in the West—in terms of its great marketing potential. It is the month during which companies of all sort donate gifts and prizes to various mass media which in turn offer them to excited audience. For Jordan it is the ultimate in marketing gimmicks. You shop and win lottery tickets; you read your daily newspaper and get a chance to participate in one of two, three or even four grand prizes for all ages: for the old, the young, the housewife, the son, the daughter. There is even

one for Sri Lankan maids! Well, maybe next year. Middle class Jordanian families constitute the bulk of this marketing effort. Some families go on alert months before the advent of Ramadan, with family members preparing themselves for the grand Ramadan quizzes. Family members share responsibilities of cutting coupons, answering questions, posting or faxing them to the organiz-

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Extends its wishes to His Majesty King Hussein and the Jordanian people on the occasion of Eid El Fitr. The Star will not appear next Thursday. The next issue will appear on Thursday 12 February

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

● Garaudy, antisémite en France, héros ici

● Les profits juteux des boules de cristal

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AMMAN, 28 JANUARY — 11 FEBRUARY 1998, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 36, 350 FILS اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Government says it will respect verdict Court's ruling on temporary press law hailed as victory for press freedom, democracy

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

JORDAN'S PRESS body celebrated Monday's High Court of Justice historic ruling which nullified the widely "condemned" temporary Press and Publication Law of 1997. After months of deliberations and adjournments, the 10-judge court panel finally said that the temporary law was unconstitutional. It also ruled in favor of the 13 weekly newspapers whose licenses were suspended and later revoked under the new law.

The law in question was imposed by AJ Majali's government last May, creating a national uproar. The government came under fire for being in grave violation of the free-

dom of the press in the country. The law, which introduced draconian measures against newspapers, particularly the weekly press, forced the closure of 13 weekly papers, while according to government's interpretation, had failed to meet the financial and administrative requirements.

However, the verdict of the Court this week elicited a sigh of relief from journalists and opposition leaders, alike, who had accused the government of adopting repressive measures to reverse the country's democratic process.

Political parties hailed the Court's decision as a victory for the Jordanian justice system and a triumph for democracy.

The Court's verdict also cur-

tailed government's powers in issuing temporary laws in the future.

The 10-judge Higher Judiciary Committee, presided by Judge Abdullah Haddad's rule was based on article 94 of the Constitution, which says that the authority of the Council of Ministers to release the temporary laws is restricted to two cases: if Parliament was not in session or has been dissolved. Secondly, the power to issue provisional laws covering matters which require necessary measures which admit of no delay or which necessitate expenditures incapable of postponement. Such provisional laws shall not be contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, the Court stressed.

The Court found out that while Parliament was not sitting at the time when the government released the temporary law, however, concerning the case of the required necessary status of releasing temporary laws, the Court ruled that the temporary press law failed to meet that status.

According to legal experts, the latest Court ruling will chain the government to release any temporary legislations in the future, that violates article 94 of the Constitution.

In the same ruling, the Court canceled the government decision to suspend 13 weeklies. It said that it found the decision illegal since it was based on an unconstitutional law.

Such a verdict will bring to life most of the 13 weeklies whose licenses were revoked after a period of suspension for failing to meet the requirements of the law. Accordingly, the original press law of 1993 will now be functional again.

Article 24 of the new defunct law stipulated that the weekly papers must have a registered capital of JD 300,000. This article stirred a legal debate since almost all individually or jointly owned weeklies were able to meet conditions of the article. However, the government said it understood the article to mean that the capital must be paid in full.

What is the next step? According to press reports, most of the weeklies will come back soon, but it is still unclear if the affected papers will sue the government for compensations.

"Our paper is coming back after the Eid," said Nidal Mansour, editor-in-chief of Al-Hadath weekly, one of the week-

lies that were suspended.

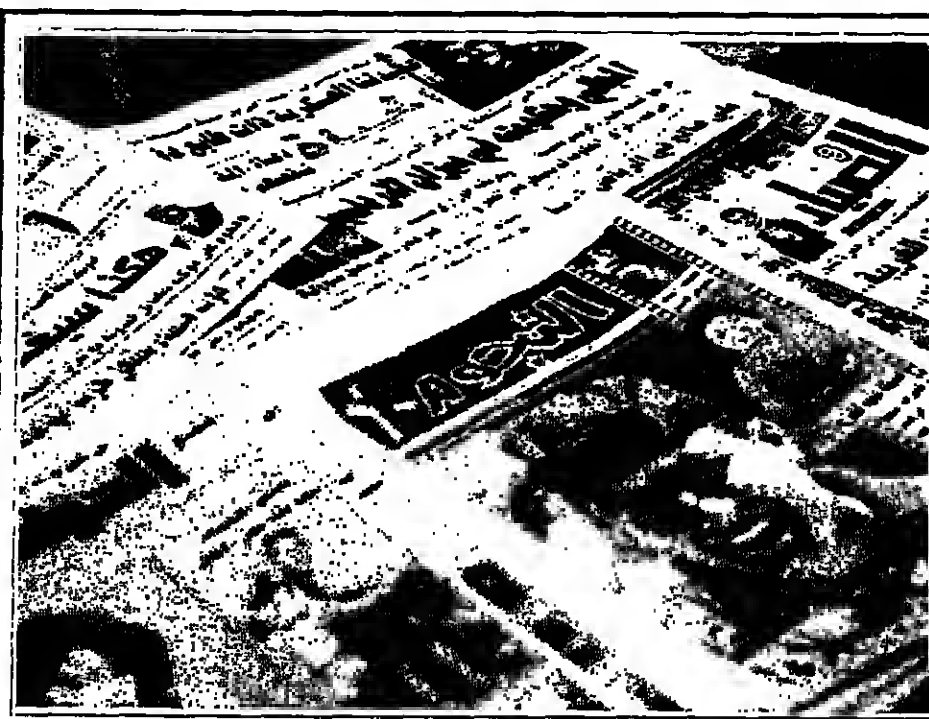
Clinton and his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, believe the story is "beginning to turn" now that the president, during a brief appearance Monday, issued "a pretty emphatic denial," one adviser said.

White House officials said a virtual "crisis cabinet" has formed around Clinton and the first lady to organize a strategy to rebut allegations that the president had a sexual relation-

ship with a former White House intern and sought to persuade her to conceal the affair from investigators.

Many of the Clintons' crisis advisers have battled controversies of their own. Morris resigned after he confessed to giving presidential documents to a prostitute. But the gravity of the charges against the president—and the near-panic engendered by the White House's uncertain initial response—led the Clintons to reach for all the help they could get, aides said.

At the center of the crisis team is the first lady, several people involved in the effort said. "The first lady is totally engaged (and) focused," said one. "She's the strategist, engaged on the strategy, talking to the lawyers." At Hillary Clinton's side is former Commerce secretary and Los Angeles lawyer Mickey Kantor. His biggest credential: In the 1992 presidential campaign,



Guess who is back? After an absence of about four months the sensational weeklies will soon be in action following the latest ruling of the High Court.

Clinton turns to combat-savvy advisers to handle crisis

By Doyle McManus

WASHINGTON—Scrambling to survive the worst political crisis of his career, President Clinton has turned to the combat-savvy advisers who helped him escape a lifetime's worth of tight spots in the past—including Dick Morris, the 1996 campaign strategist who quit that post in his own sex scandal—and the near-panic engendered by the White House's uncertain initial response—led the Clintons to reach for all the help they could get, aides said.

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he was a key player in the effort that helped Clinton survive charges of womanizing, draft-dodging and marijuana use—and he is trusted by the first lady. "It's just a normal attorney-client relationship," Kantor's legal partner, Kenneth S. Geller, said in a moment of understatement. "Somebody needs legal advice and Mickey is well qualified to give it."

Kantor will officially be described as merely "assisting" Clinton's two private lawyers, Robert S. Bennett and David E. Kendall—but only to preserve "the egos involved," the official said. The controversial Morris is playing a lesser but still intriguing role, officials said. The political strategist has been faxing suggestions to Clinton, and may have been on

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Lebanon: Between a rock and a hard place

By Roula Khalaf

ONLY THE muddy tracks of Israeli tanks break the smoothness of the hills and valleys of this lonely part of southern Lebanon. In Israel's self-styled security zone, where shelling has become part of daily business, life is all about insecurity.

On the last active front in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel's forces have never been more cautious. They stay off the main roads to avoid roadside bombings. Cars entering the zone have to change their number plates and drivers say the Israeli army has requested that cars carry at least two people because a lone driver is a potential suicide bomber.

Cut off from the rest of Lebanon, residents hear of increasing pressure within Israel to withdraw from the zone it has controlled since 1978. They know the end will come one day, but in the meantime, which side do you take to survive both the present and the future?

"Those who have political sense know Israel won't just leave after all it has invested here. Others are afraid," says a local Christian worker. "Some are part of the resistance and don't accept the Israelis. Others accept anything."

Ali is an aspiring farmer from Khyam, a little town looking down on the fertile Marjayoun valley, where a Shia majority lives next to Christian neighbours. The more talk Ali hears of Israeli withdrawal, the more confused he becomes: "The Lebanese government won't help me because I'm already tainted (by perceptions of collaboration) and I can't take Israeli help because then I

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Education Ministry ponders future challenges

By Ibtisam Awadat

Special to The Star

THREE MAIN topics regarding education have come under the spotlights recently. One of the most controversial idea that is in circulation among educationalists is putting certain schools under a wholly female administration. The idea is viewed as dangerous and an invitation for mixed organizations some suggest.

However, others strongly support the idea. "I think it is a step in the right direction, since women are an important part of the society who can well handle leading positions," Dr Ghazi Al Sawda, a sociology professor at the University of Jordan says.

"Everyone should learn that

sex has nothing to do with the distribution of responsibilities or positions, what matters is the capacities and qualifications," Dr Al Sawda adds.

The motives behind this experiment varies from one person to another.

"In the ministry we had a problem in finding good and experienced headmasters, since they are being lent, under their request, to Arab countries or they simply leave teaching for other profitable careers," Dr Munther Al Masri, minister of education tells The Star.

"To solve the dilemma we are faced with two choices either to accept less efficient headmasters, or to have well and highly experienced head-

stress that there is a shortage of capable administrators in leading position in boy schools. He rejects all fears and suspicion for all female idea which is still ink on paper. "Implementation depends on the necessity of the schools and the desire of the headmistresses," Dr Al Masri points out.

But this topic is not of a lesser headache than the teaching of Christianity to public schools.

The minister says that the decision was taken in the 1970s but only applied to private schools.

Dr Mahmoud Al Massadi, general director of education in the ministry told The Star about

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Beauty in Buenos Aires

The survival of the prettiest

By Ken Warn

THE CAPTAIN at last said he had one question, which he would be very much obliged if I would answer with all truth. I trembled to think how deeply scientific it would be: it was, "Whether the ladies of Buenos Ayres were not the handsomest in the world," I replied, charmingly so.

Charles Darwin, Voyage of the Beagle.

Argentina's official religion is Roman Catholicism. But on the streets of Buenos Aires at least, a rival faith holds sway. Its followers gather in the gyms that have sprung up every few blocks, in the beauty parlours on every corner, or the lingerie shops that appear every few paces. It is the cult of beauty.

The city's women make many sacrifices to achieve the cult's highest goals. In the smart northern districts, whole mornings, even, days, are spent at the beauticians.

Demand for facials, leg waxing or extending your fingernails into gleaming, unbreakable talons with acrylic (a snip at \$55) becomes most frenzied just before the weekend.

In this forcing house for good looks, the norm is overtly, defiantly artificial. In the well-to-do barrios, a tailored suit, mascara and lashings of Lancôme fond de teint maketh the woman. For the young, or young at heart, a bare, pampas-flat stomach and skin-tight flares are de rigueur.

This society decided long ago that blondes have more fun. Womeo are not afraid to reach for the peroxide bottle to make sure they get their share. Men of mature years, in contrast, often sport implausible, inky-black hair.

Depilation is an obsession, judging by

the number of practitioners. "Latest Spanish black-wax technology," proclaim the hoardings. "There seems to be an iron law that says you aren't allowed to have any body hair," says one astonished Uruguayan-born woman resident. "Anywhere."

Those unfavoured by nature need not despair. An estimated one in 30 of Argentina's population from President Carlos Menem downwards has had plastic surgery. Strip out children and the poor, and that means a huge proportion of Argentina's middle classes has gone under the knife. In the gym changing rooms, breast enhancements are talked of as openly as buying a new dress.

The intensity of the desire for physical perfection and display has deep roots. When Darwin passed through in the 1830s, local women had taken the Spanish fashion for wearing tortoise-shell combs to incredible extremes. They struggled to anchor the soaring, jewelled contraptions in their hair. Later came waves of poor Italian immi-

grants, determined to present una bella figura, however desperate their circumstances.

Tango culture, now undergoing something of a revival, elevated a vampish ideal of feminine elegance, and a dandyish punctiliousness in men's dress. Eva Peron still an icon of womanhood for many loathed the rich, but loved their clothes. Die-hard Peronists fondly recall the 800 pairs of shoes Evita owned at her death.

Mix in the coosumerism that has flowered with Argentina's economic opening in the 1990s, and the triumph of over-the-counter beauty is complete.

"Physical beauty confers the same kind of advantages here as genealogy did in England," says Sylvia Walger, a writer on Argentine society. "It's like being a lord, it's a passport for everywhere. And people with money like to show it. Show, show, show."

Argentina also remains a deeply macho

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Can anything be done about flirts?

By Hitham Awadat
Star Staff Writer

IT HAS become a usual scene: boys chasing girls, trying to talk to them and if they are very lucky they could just get a date.

"I wait in front of the girls' schools. If I like one, I follow to give her my telephone number," Ahmad, a teenager says in a proud tone.

But it's not smooth all the time. "Sometimes, when my friend and I annoy a girl and follow her to her house, it could just turn out to be a trap and her father or brothers would come chasing after me," Ahmad complains.

But, is it always the same. Ayman, a young married salesman, says it's the girls who initiate. "Many times, young girls try to give me their telephone numbers, but I don't need more problems."

The phenomenon becomes even more dangerous when men sit next to girls in service cars or buses. No one would expect to hear a woman yell to the man besides her or even behind her seat. Recently a very unpleasantly worrying thing happened.

"I was riding from Amman to Zarqa. I reached the bus when it was about to leave. I saw a man who was sharing the same seat. The girl claimed that the man was deliberately

making passes at her. In turn the man strongly denied such an accusation and swore he didn't. But to solve the problem quickly, the driver became involved and asked the man to move to another seat.

In Jordan, and in Muslim countries, women are respected because they represent honor and purity, that's why anyone who tries to play with that must be ready to face the consequences.

"If we receive an official complaint about harassment the young man would be kept at the station between 24 to 48 hours," says Maj. Abd Allah Nawaisch from Al Hussein police station.

"As the young man is sent to the Governor (in this case Amman) he or his family must sign a financial undertaking which could be more than JD 500," Mr Nawaisch continues.

The phenomena "increases during holidays and feasts, where crowds gather at the same time either in shopping areas, or after schools." As Mr Nawaisch mentions in certain cases, young men could be arrested and wouldn't be released unless his family and the girl's family reach an agreement like what happened with one of the young men recently.

"This phenomena exists in all societies but increases in those where the figures of the unemployed are high," Dr Sari Naser, a

sociology professor at the University of Jordan, says.

"In their free time, this is one way of expressing themselves, which is the wrong way," Dr Nasser continues that there are solutions to this. "Increasing awareness among youngsters," is one of them. Another would be establishing more co-educational schools and move to have more mixed societies for boys and girls, so that the boys realize that the girl is a human being and not a mysterious enigma to be explored."

As Dr Naser says "the general trend nowadays calls for mixed institutions where women could study and work with their male colleagues."

But this is certainly not the view of others. "Mixed societies and institutions [workplaces] are not the solution, but lead to the magnification of the problem and increases the relation between men and women," Dr Hamdi Murad, general secretary of the Awkaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry explains.

"Chasing girls and other such like behavior, to talk or to telephone them [girls] is a one way thing. Girls usually wouldn't respond to such overtures. He points out. "However, if you allow mixing in institutions, you will create a more care-free society where meetings of the two



sexes would become very natural, exceeding the limits of reason and logic."

As Dr Murad said "this situation will lead us to illegal relationships which our Islamic religion forbid."

And finally "the harassment phenomenon is against our Islamic morals and also against the nature of the humanitarian relationship which must be established for noble goals."

Ramadan marketing bonanza

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ers. Some even devise ways to calculate their chances of winning, buying five seven or nine copies of the daily newspaper to increase their chance of winning.

As to the prizes, well one could furnish an empty house if one plays his cards right. There are cars, plenty of cars actually, and there are furniture, kitchen appliances, carpets, TV sets, videos, satellite dishes, air tickets, hotel rooms, perfumes, watches, and even scholarships to Oxford. A really dedicated Jordanian family can ensure many benefits during Ramadan.

In fact, there are professional winners out there who somehow manage to win something in all of these competitions. That does not come easy. It's an investment that requires money, time and knowledge. For instance: What was the name of Saladin's horse? Or, how many eggs can a Malaysian Peacock lay in a week? Information like this does not come easily or cheaply. Special books and references are required. Some participants have even used the Internet to find out exactly why Hitler's mother decided to change her name after the fall of Berlin in 1945.

But these are the difficult questions. Some media offer easy quizzes in order to get as many participants as possible. Professionals don't much care for these and prefer to concentrate on the tough ones where the big money is.

And so after a marathon of 30 days and many quizzes and puzzles, the tired Jordanian people look forward to a rest and then they begin their high wait. And no sooner that the prizes are given away to the lucky winners than preparations get under way for the coming Ramadan. Happy Eid!

The survival of the prettiest

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society where the women's movement never really took hold. In the 1970s, radical thinkers had more immediate problems than overturning sexual stereotypes. They were too busy keeping out of the clutches of a murderous military regime.

As a result, there is little gender solidarity among women. "Women prefer to negotiate bilaterally with men, not as a group," says Walger. "It's a kind of hand-to-hand combat."

There are dark sides to this pursuit of perfection. A recent study showed that one in 10 teenage girls suffers from anorexia or other eating disorders, a much higher proportion than in the US or western Europe. The pressure to be thin is intense. The city's cable TV channels are swamped with ads for slimming products and fitness equipment. While the male models are muscle-bound hunks, at least after using the revolutionary new Abscaptor. Abshaper or Bunbuster, the women are usually undernourished waifs.

Teenage girls long to emulate successful Argentine models, to the despair of mothers in the professional classes who have struggled for a foothold in a male-dominated world. At an early age, these children are conscious of one ineluctable law the survival of the prettiest. The emphasis on perfect grooming can make life difficult for foreigners. "Sometimes when I pick up the kids from school I feel like a bag lady," says one expatriate. "All the mothers are standing chatting in their little leather skirts and chichi sunglasses. It's like the Stepford Wives."

A visiting Israeli tells the story of how his colleagues fixed him up with a blind date for the evening. They met outside a cinema, chatted for a while, and he followed her into the auditorium after a trip to the gents. But scanning the rows of seats, he was unable to distinguish his date from the massed ranks of handsome blondes. He shrugged his shoulders and went back to his hotel.

Financial Times-Syndication

Court's ruling on temporary press law hailed as victory for press freedom, democracy

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lie, that was forced to close. "Our losses are huge, but we will not take a revenge mentality," he said. "We will study our case again from a legal point of view and then think if we will ask for compensation."

The annulment of the temporary law also puts the fate of the draft law submitted to Parliament for ratification in question. According to deputy Nayer Mola, the head of the National Guidance Committee of the Lower House, "Since the Court ruled that the law is unconstitutional then the committee will recommend that the law be returned to the government."

Deputy Abdel Karim Al Daghini, stressed that "...the House must reject the law to comply with the Court's verdict." Mr Al Daghini, who is also a former minister of Justice, added that "the government has no right to demand that the House ratifies the law."

Lawyer Hani Al Dahla, one of the five-lawyer committee which handled the case of the eight weekly papers, said the Court's ruling is clear: "the temporary law does not exist anymore, and the 1993 Press and Publication Law is currently the active law."

Mr Dahla added that all requirements of the temporary law are useless and newspapers will revert to the 1993 law. "The Lower House must return the temporary law to the government because it is illegal," Dahla added. "Then it is up to the government, it can either submit it again just as it is, amend it or simply do nothing."

The government welcomed the Court's decision which now obliges it to stick to the law.

Minister of State for Information Affairs Mr Samir Mutaweh said after a cabinet meeting, Tuesday, that "We are a democratic country that respects the constitution and law and we respect the judicial system." The Minister added that the government was not officially informed of the Court's verdict, adding that "when we are informed we will start implementing the ruling."

He said that the temporary press law has already been submitted to Parliament and the draft is in the hands of deputies "who are the authority."

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Between a rock and a hard place

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become a collaborator."

The problem in Khyam, as in the rest of the zone, about 12 percent of Lebanon, is that people have been forced to pick a side. Their patriotic feelings draw them towards Beirut. The pressure to survive the present draws them to the South Lebanon Army, Israel's Lebanese allies, a mixed militia of Muslims and Christians considered traitors by the Lebanese government.

Among the Shia communities of the zone, there are defections from the SLA in Hizbullah on the other side of the mountain, the home of the Shia Hizbullah movement, the principal force of resistance to Israeli occupation.

Like the rest of occupied south Lebanon, Khyam is run by the SLA, though the Lebanese government manages the civil administration. It was natural in the early years to work with the SLA, which was said to have put pressure on people to join. And anyway, Lebanon was tearing itself apart in civil war and betting on Israel and its allies seemed as safe as the dangerous, unpredictable conditions allowed.

But the people of Khyam are starting to realize that times have changed. It is only in the security zone that the war seems to have gone on. The rest of Lebanon is busy rebuilding. The Christian parties that co-operated with Israel in 1982 have learned that

it did not pay off. And the Beirut government has rallied support among Moslems and Christians against Israeli occupation.

Out of several tens of thousands who once lived in Khyam, there are only 7,000 left. Most of them live off remittances from relatives abroad. Some have joined the disparate band of 3,000 SLA soldiers with a base salary of \$300 a month. It is the best deal in town. Others cross into Israel each day to do menial jobs, which can bring in several hundred dollars a month more.

In Khyam, your brother could work for the Lebanese administration, while your sister works for the SLA and your father in Israel.

Samir is an aspiring musician. A member of his family has been condemned in his absence by Beirut for collaboration. Samir's band used to play in clubs in Beirut but he no longer dares to go. "If I go, I'll get punished in Beirut," he says. "But I also need to work in Beirut."

All the farmer once patrolled the streets for the SLA. So some might already call him a collaborator. His farming business has collapsed because he cannot sell his produce in Beirut. He says the government suspects they might be mingled with Israeli products. And, although Israeli products fill

the shelves of nearby supermarkets, he says the Israelis won't let the Lebanese produce in.

"I have no education, all I have is the land or the SLA. But my father, to whom I listen, is against my working for the SLA," says Ali. Historically, southern Lebanon the occupied and unoccupied parts have been neglected by Beirut, and suspicions of the Lebanese government and its domination by Syria run high.

"An agricultural co-operative in Beirut sent us fertilisers this year and rat poison," says Ali. "But the poison was past its sell-by date, and the rats ate it and didn't die, they just kept getting bigger."

All tried this year to get into Beirut to see friends, he says, but the SLA prevented him. The Lebanese government has been questioning people leaving the zone, and the SLA wants to stem the flow of information about its operations and the people involved.

Ali's 18-year-old son doesn't know what to do with his life. The SLA is the best-paying job. "You can't go to the hajj when everyone's coming back," says Ali, quoting a Lebanese proverb. "The best thing for him is just to leave, get out of the country."

Financial Times-Syndication

Clinton turns to combat-savvy advisers to handle crisis

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the telephone with the president as well.

White House Deputy Chief of Staff Bruce Lindsey, former Deputy Chief of Staff Harold M. Ickes, and Los Angeles television producer Harry Thomason, a longtime Clinton confidant, are deeper in the Clintons' inner circle. Lindsey, an Arkansas lawyer, has been one of the Clinton's closest confidants for decades. "Bruce is the keeper of the secrets," one official said. Ickes, a hard-nosed New York attorney, is the take-no-prisoners political operative who orchestrated Clinton's political comeback after Republicans swept to control of Congress in the 1994 elections and the president's reelection prospects seemed doubtful. Thomason, a Hollywood TV and movie producer, is a longtime Clinton friend from Arkansas who has often taken on the role of bolstering

the president's confidence in times of crisis. All except Morris served in Clinton's 1992 campaign—which appears to be the model for White House strategy today.

In February of 1992, as he struggled through a blitzard of allegations seeking to keep his presidential hopes alive, Clinton described his strategy this way: "A lot of politicians just sit around waiting for the other shoe to fall. They always think something bad can happen and take them out, and I guess it can. What I've tried to do, instead of just hunkering in, you know, is just kind of turn into the storm and see if we can weather it."

Clinton's statement Monday morning that "these allegations are false, and I need to go back to work for the American people," for example, is almost the same formula he used in New Hampshire to respond to the twin allegations of draft evasion and an affair with Gennifer Flowers.

So, too, is the effort of White House aides to focus public attention on the motives of his attackers. In 1992, the campaign focused its hostility on the media; this time the White House thunder is focused on Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr. "The main thing is to just keep on going and let a lot of this stuff swirl out of the way," said one of the president's longest-standing advisers. "You just keep trading through," the adviser said, expressing a growing confidence that doing so will allow the scandal to "burn out of the way a bit."

LA Times-Ashington Post News Service

Education Ministry ponders future challenges

Continued from page 1

the mechanism and procedures taken by the ministry to implement the decision. "We have chosen five regions where the number of Christian students is high. These are in Madaba, Ajlun, Salt, Irbid and Al Qasr."

"Then we coordinated with the leaders of the Christian denominations who agreed on a single curriculum to be provided to students," Dr Al Massad continues.

To invest in the available capacities, the ministry decided to allocate one-day to teaching Christianity on Thursday.

The Christian and private schools have agreed to host the Christians students from the governmental schools, so teaching began in Madaba, three schools are going to receive

more than 154 students," Dr Massad explained. Meanwhile the teaching of Christianity in public schools will soon begin in Fuhais and other regions.

Dr Al Massad stresses "the aim of the process is to provide Christians by the teachings of their religion and not the cultural religion aspects."

This is a hot topic, the effect of which is not likely to be felt unless in the immediate future. And the headache is continuing for the Ministry of Education.

The latest controversial issue is forged certificates.

"Forged Tawjih certificates spread, three years ago, after the Gulf War, because there was no contact between ministries of education of some Arab countries," the minister says.

Mr Ahmad Salem Al Ali, general director of exams in the

Ministry, revealed interesting information.

"The process of forgery doesn't take place in this country, since the ministry asks for original certificates from students."

As we know, Arab and foreign students continue their higher studies in Jordan, their certificates are revised by the ministry.

"We have two kind of certificates, Arab ones which only need verification, second foreign certificates which need to be equated."

In the last three years, officials realized of the existence of false certificates, so they began to check. Mr. Al Ali admits that 114 forged Arab certificates were caught and 58 false foreign ones. 12 of these originated from Russia, 12

from Malaysia, 16 from the USA, 15 from Britain, 2 from Romania and one forged certificate from Pakistan.

The ministry have other certificates which are being checked from Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand and Venezuela.

The 114 Arab forged cases are now in the hands of the general attorney, while eight forged Jordanian certificates were discovered in Arab countries.

"Through exchanging letters, and after a tour to private universities, falsification can be discovered. We found many certificates that were not verified."

Mr Al Ali explained that dozens of university students were dismissed because of their certificates, while others were

asked to put the papers in order.

Mr Al Ali assured that the old mechanism of verification is now cancelled.

"We used to depend on the signature of the educational advisor (of our embassies abroad) and the signature of the original country which gave the certificate."

"We found that the process can be tampered with, since forgers can imitate the verification of the original resource."

Mr Al Ali adds, in some cases the signature of the Advisor had been forged and as a final step, forgers could play with a verified and signed certificate by changing the name of the student.

"After we become sure that the certificate isn't the proper one, we write to the official authorities, to the Ministry of High Education, Civil Service Commission, Professional Associations and to the prosecuting attorney," Mr Al Ali, who received many threatening letters from forgers continues.

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سنة ١٤١٩



Arab Gulf

Our Say...

High Court corrects government's blunders

THE HISTORIC ruling of the High Court of Justice this week on the temporary press law re-engages the nation into the democratic process from which it was separated in May 1997. The 10-man panel, representing the highest judicial body in the land, has ruled that the temporary law is unconstitutional. As a result, the controversial law is nullified as the original 1993 press law is reconstituted.

The case will prove to be one of the most cited in Jordanian political and judicial history. The issues related to the government's sudden enactment of a temporary legislation to replace one of the most liberal press laws in the region have evolved in such a way that the fate of Jordan's budding democracy became pinned to the outcome of this case.

It was not the future of few weekly newspapers that mattered as much as the ominous change in the mentality of those in control of the executive branch over how the democratic system should be steered. By resorting to temporary laws, allowed under the Constitution in rare and special cases only and as an exception to the rule, the government had tampered with the rules that govern all Jordanians in a democratic framework. It had trespassed on areas that do not fall under its authority as one of the three branches of government in the Kingdom.

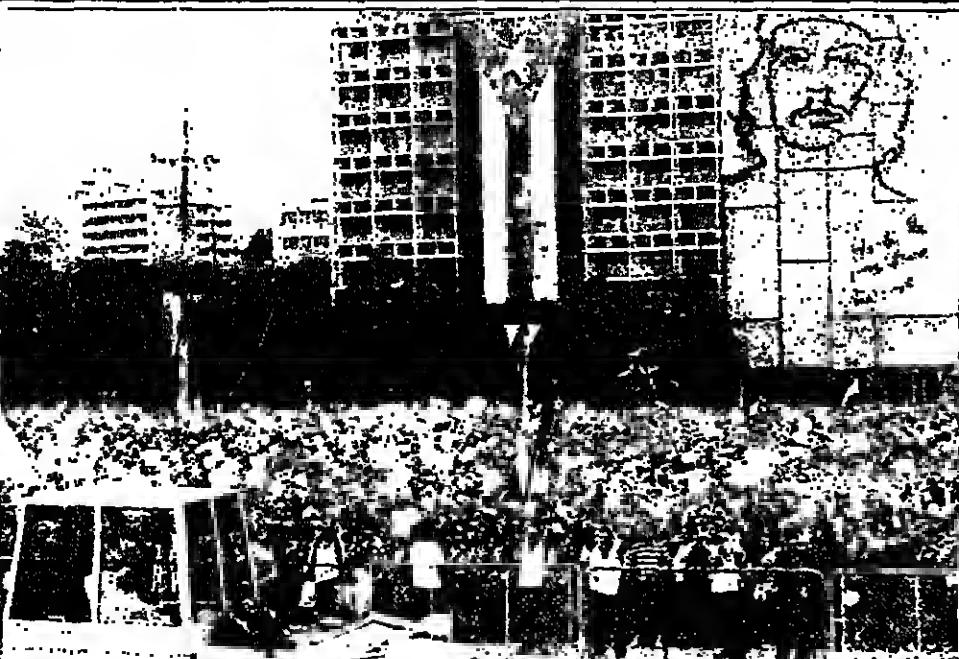
Such tampering altered the democratic equilibrium that existed and cast it shadow on the direction of the political process that reached its zenith with the opposition's boycott of the November elections.

This week's verdict restores the balance to our democratic system. It says that the government had erred in passing a draft law without referring it first to the party that has the right of legislation. But what the verdict also means is that through the government's error the democratic system is able correct itself, if not through the legislative branch, then through the judicial.

The current government must review the events of the past eight months carefully to ascertain its worthiness to Jordan's political system at this stage. At the same time, Jordanians must use this important development to enrich once more the democratic transition that was taking place prior to the May 1997 blunder.

We have said it before that laws are not eternal edicts that cannot be changed. In dynamic societies, the complexity of the legislative process is a sign of maturity and wisdom. The press law may need to be amended some time in the future, but that should be done through the proper constitutional channels. We must also remember that freedom of the press is a main foundation in a democratic society and that tampering with this foundation means putting the whole edifice at risk.

If we ponder on this week's ruling, we arrive at the conclusion that regardless of the law in question, the executive branch was caught trespassing and it was told to leave by the guardians of the Jordanian constitution. This is a sign that democracy in Jordan has come a long way. ■



● Pope John Paul II greeted by thousands of Cubans in Havana's Revolution Plaza, Sunday. This was a finale to Pope Paul's historic five-day visit to the little country.

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Notes from the Levant

The Middle East and Clinton's sex scandal: Between fresh interns and old hands

By Osama El-Sherif

HERE IN the Middle East, not unlike the rest of the world, we could not afford to be impervious to Bill Clinton's sexual tribulations. In fact, next to the American people, the Arabs are probably as concerned, troubled and even amused by Clinton's latest peccadillo. And for good reason.

The White House sex scandal is likely to include, among its prime victims, the Middle East process and Iraq. Both have comically become the usual victims of any mishap that ruffles the feathers of those in charge in the great American capital.

As a result of this latest annoyance, President Clinton's determination to finding a way to jump-start the stalemated peace process must have suffered as details of his alleged sexual affair, back in 1995, with a young White House intern were made public. As expected in such cases, where the sexual conquests of the world leader are involved, the media went into a feeding frenzy since the scandal could lead to Clinton's resignation or impeachment. As he struggled this week to break through the tight circle of allegations and accusations that has tarnished his presidency, President Clinton was not expected to spend precious time and effort coining the Israeli premier into honoring obligations made to the Palestinians under the Oslo Accords.

Many in the Arab world began wondering about the timing of this latest scandal, and why it was made public just when Clinton appeared to be ready to apply much needed pressure on a recalcitrant Benjamin Netanyahu. Many also wondered about the fact that the woman in the center of Clinton's troubles, Monica Lewinsky, happens to be a Jew.

In Israel, Clinton's misfortunes must have come as a life-saver to a cornered Netanyahu. While he offered nothing during his Washington visit last week he was still concerned about the fact that relations with the United States, Israel's main benefactor and supporter, were strained. Netanyahu's own troubles at home are yet to subside, having submitted lately to mounting pressure from extreme right-wing parties. He too had faced a humiliated Israeli public some time ago over his own extra-marital forays while his wife, Sara, continues to attract attention from the media every now and then.

Meanwhile, Chairman Arafat's visit to Washington last week to present his case to the American president could not have come at a worse time. Clinton listened politely to Arafat's complaints, but his mind must have been elsewhere. He had to think of his own ordeal at home: popularity ratings dipping like icy Wash-

ington temperatures in January nights. He must have thought of the prospects of another Watergate-like affair blowing up if his alleged involvement in asking Miss Lewinsky to perjure herself was proven correct by the prosecutor who has been on his tail like a hound since the genesis of this scandal-ridden presidency.

So did Arafat make any lasting impressions on the Washington media? Definitely not. Few were interested in Netanyahu's unfaithfulness. Another sort of infidelity, the *Clinton kind*, was taking the nation by storm. This is the stuff that shoots viewing figures through the roof and creates stars of dreary White House correspondents who look like over-worked civil servants.

So Arafat must wait until Clinton recovers. If he ever does, from his latest calamity. The time wasted as a result gives Netanyahu breathing space to put his house in order especially after the recent departure of David Levy from the shaky coalition government.

Clinton may yet pay dearly for his lack of discretion. He has turned the White House into another kind of house and the American people don't like that. After all Clinton holds the most powerful job in the world and while for some the issue is about morality, for others it is about vulnerability.



Clinton: Still fighting despite odds

For the Arabs, Clinton's fall from grace means that the Middle East file will be moved to the back burner for a while. Again, Israel stands to gain from such a reshuffle. For the Arabs, the Clinton administration was the most pro-Zionist in history, with Jews like Burger, Cohen, Albright, Ross and Ladyk forming the president's inner circle. An administration under President Al Gore will not fare any better. Under Clinton, the Arabs, in particular the Palestinians and the Iraqis, never had a fair hearing. What exactly is the Zionist influence on this administration is still a recondite issue.

Which brings us to the second element in the Middle East that stands to be affected by Clinton's latest debacle. Iraq was busy steering through UN's rough waters when the scandal broke out leaving the US president looking, according to Washington pundits, for an emotional issue that he could use to deflect attention from his personal troubles. As Iraq defied UN orders to open all sites, including presidential palaces, to weapons inspectors, the tone of US officials grew sharper and more threatening. If the US and Britain fail to get the Security Council behind them, then it is likely that both could direct a series of military strikes against Baghdad without the council's consent in the coming few weeks.

The Iraqis have sensed that Clinton may very well seek to redeem his image through a military strike against Iraq. While Iraq stands accused of a technical violation of one of the many Security Council resolutions, Clinton too is accused of violating, among others, at least one of the key biblical commandments! If he sanctions a strike this time, it will be too clear that he would be seeking to salvage his own presidency rather than destroying Saddam Hussein and his alleged weapon arsenal.

So while the Arabs, like the rest of the world, watch with intrigue the details of Clinton's sex scandal unfolding, they know deep in their hearts that Iraq and the Palestinians may have been the early casualties of this steamy affair.

Clinton may survive the current crisis, but it will take some time before he makes a full recovery. And he may not. His relationship with other women has been the gadfly of this presidency. There is still the case of Paula Jones, which has just started and has been overshadowed by the Lewinsky affair. And who knows what else the mischievous president is hiding in his closet? ■

Clinton's question of character

By Robert Shogan

NEW YORK—The people whose character is really an issue are those who would divert the attention of the people and divide the country we love." Bill Clinton declared six years ago this winter as he ran for president and his character first came under attack on the national political stage.

And ever since, Clinton has used much the same argument—along with indignant denials—to shield himself from the intermittent firestorms of criticism.

But now, as he faces the most serious character-related charge of his career—that he sought to cover up an affair with a young White House intern—the cumulative toll taken on his credibility by all these previous controversies escalates the peril to his presidency.

In a legal sense, as Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr pointed out this week, Clinton is entitled to the presumption of innocence. But in political terms, analysts question whether the public will give him the benefit of the doubt any longer.

"First you had Gennifer (Flowers), then you had Paula (Jones), now you have Monica (Lewinsky)," said Ohio University presidential scholar Alonzo Hamby, referring to the three most notorious cases of alleged sexual misbehavior by Clinton.

"It's gotten to the point where people are asking themselves, 'How can we trust this guy?'"

Starr was appointed to his post to look into another reputed scandal—the Whitewater af-

fair, centering on a real estate deal the president and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton became involved in when he was still attorney general of Arkansas.

As a result of these and other allegations, Clinton's rating for integrity and trust generally has been relatively low among politicians.

In a Gallup Poll last year, Americans asked to compare Clinton's ethical standards to other recent presidents rated Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Jimmy Carter ahead of Clinton by margins of about 2-to-1 or better. Indeed, only Richard Nixon, forced to resign in disgrace because of the Watergate scandal, trailed Clinton in this regard.

So how did Clinton win two presidential elections? Part of the answer, according to Everett C. Ladd, director of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, is that while the public did not necessarily believe his denials, they accepted his argument that the charges about his personal conduct had nothing to do with his presidency.

"Americans for some reason believe that the distinction between a president's personal conduct on one side and things that are pertinent to his public performance is one that should be taken seriously," Ladd said.

And both the Clintons have done all they could to play off that belief. As the womanizing allegations—sparked by Flowers' assertion of a 13-year affair with Clinton—threatened to derail his presidential hopes

in the 1992 New Hampshire primary campaign, Hillary Clinton asked the voters of the then-economically stricken state: "Is anything about our marriage as important to the people of New Hampshire as whether or not they will have a chance to keep their own families together?"

Analysts say one reason the current furor will be harder for Clinton to withstand than past controversies is that the alleged misconduct took place in the White House, while he was president. Most of the other allegations against him were linked to his past in Arkansas and were easier to dismiss as irrelevant to his performance as chief executive.

Another factor that makes Clinton's alleged dalliance with Lewinsky seem particularly unsavory, and potentially disastrous, is the intern's tender age, according to the analysts. They speculate that should the preponderance of evidence indicate the affair did occur, many Americans who were willing to overlook extramarital relationships between mature adults will find it harder to tolerate a romance between a middle-aged man and a woman not much older than his own daughter.

In this environment, Clinton's public standing can't help but suffer, the analysts say. "I think he will be permanently branded as a rogue," said University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato, even though he believes Clinton will escape a formal legal judgment. "People don't want him con-

victed of anything," Sabato said. Investigators would have to come up with "a lot of evidence against the president" to alter that view.

George Edwards, director of the Center for the Study of the Presidency at Texas A&M, says, "He's not going to be able to set the agenda with his State of the Union speech," he held last Tuesday. "Everything he says is going to be interpreted through this story."

Also to Clinton's disadvantage is the difference in the political landscape. When the charges of womanizing surfaced during Clinton's first campaign for president, "Voters shrugged them off because they wanted to get rid of Bush," said Sabato.

But in Clinton's second term, "There is no compelling political reason" to stand by him, Sabato said, especially with the relatively untarnished Vice President Gore waiting in the wings.

"Now the political choice is not between Clinton and Bush, but between Clinton and Gore," Sabato said.

In these circumstances, Democrats may be slower to rally around Clinton than they have in the past when they viewed their political fortunes as tied to his. Now, unless the allegations are rapidly dispelled, analysts say that for Democrats, Clinton will become a problem to which Gore is the only solution. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Middle East Beat

by Khairi Jambek

Looming trouble!

IN THE Middle East, we don't seem to be too enthusiastic about the coming millennium, and perhaps it is our fate to continue existing as bystanders, observing while history is being made. We hardly attempt to aspire for a better future.

The problem which many generations in the Arab World, as well as Israel, died expecting it to be resolved—many others are still awaiting—is still no nearer to a solution, than when the peace negotiations started. The Palestinian question, and comprehensive peace, remains hostage to designed maps, and statistical percentages. A whole human tragedy with far-reaching consequences on the psyche of Arabs and Israelis, is reduced to lines and numbers.

Let us remember that the origins of the problem, is in the method in which it was created by arbitrary lines, and unqualified statistics. We can hardly expect, that the method which had created the problem originally, can be used to solve it. HRH Crown Prince Hassan has often concentrated on the human dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in general, and the Palestinian tragedy in particular. It is with such considerations, that any serious approach towards ending the suffering of the Palestinian people can have success. Numbers and boundaries, are mere abstractions, useful for negotiators and lawyers. The real issue, is the human dimension, and it must not be ignored in the calculations. Lands and resources are to support people, and the tables cannot be turned on this issue.

The condition of the Iraqi people is deteriorating. Some are attempting to have the sanctions lifted for humanitarian reasons, others think of lucrative contracts, while still others insist on punishing the Iraqi regime, and that punishment is seen actually carried out. The judge and jury, the tanker, tailor, soldier and spy, are in a heap of contradictions, with one step forward and two steps backward.

What does this riddle mean for Iraqis? Well, it is only a riddle. Whether the regime stays, or goes, it is the Iraqi people who will foot the bill eventually, because there does not seem to be any vision towards the future Iraq and its shape. The safest and most gracious argument is being used, that the change of the political regime is an Iraqi matter, and an issue for the Iraqi people, but their circumstantial tragedy is not their business.

Here, one does not force double standards, which is incidentally a very comfortable argument, but rather a banality of contradictions that stopped making sense sometime ago. There is plenty of talk, but nothing is being said, and there is plenty of movement and nothing is being done. Regardless of the saying, power of the Iraqi regime, or otherwise, it seems that Iraq's tragedy will be staying with us, well into the next millennium.

Some serious and urgent decisions ought to be made, and it is difficult to fudge the political issues, while the economic ones are not in the hands of the Iraqi people anyway.

There is also a non-Arab dimension which will live with us in the next century, and that concerns the increased tension between Turkey and Greece, which is being blatantly displayed on the friendly lands of Cyprus. Turkish superior armed forces, and militarization of bases on the Greek side, are not the real reasons for this tension, but rather it seems that there is a process of pushing Turkey away from its main target, and that is joining the EU, and instead, there seems to be an implicit desire on the part of the nations that usually make a difference, to have Turkey play a role it does not desire, and that is supremacy in the Middle East. Turkey was willing to be a bridge between the East and the West, but as a member of the EU, ■

Business scene

■ The Amman Industrial Estate at Sahab is one of the most influential industrial complexes in the Kingdom. There are about \$1 billion worth of investments running 348 factories that represent about 40 percent of Jordanian exports. Also the estate plays an active role in reducing the level of unemployment as it has about 15,000 jobs.

■ The Housing Bank has last year generated profits estimated at more than JD 27 million compared with JD 11 million recorded in 1996. Such an increase is a signal of the Bank's efficiency and its unique services. The general budget of the Bank reached JD 1.4 billion against JD one billion the year before. It maintained a leading position in terms of its deposits and savings as deposits totaled about JD 990 million by the end of last year compared with JD 917 million in 1996.

■ The number of enterprises which benefited from the latest incentives provided by the Investment Promotion Corp. (IPC) last year totaled 191 projects. The sums invested in these projects were nearly JD 350.9 million, showing a rise of 6.4 percent. Total foreign investments in these companies totaled JD 58.8 million, that is 16.8 percent of investments for 1996. The number of registered companies for 1997 was 8294, that is a 1.8 increase over the number of companies in 1996. The total capital of these companies was JD 208.6 million compared with JD 780.2 for 1996. The industrial sector at a 147 projects took the lion's share at JD 211.2 million. The number of projects in the hotel sector was 32 at JD 108.5 million, in the agricultural sector, it was only 10 projects at JD 21.5 million, while there was one project in the transport sector at JD 4.2 million.

■ The Amman Financial market in the last week witnessed a slowdown in activity. Share trading saw a share fall by 28.1 percent. However, stock prices were also down by 10 percent.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 27 January

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SPF	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LY (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Former AFM director predicts a turning point in the market within two years

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

MR WAHIB AL SHAER is today one of the country's most forthright businessmen. Although he headed the Amman Financial Market between 1996 and 1997, today, he is the Chairman and Director-General of the Jordan and the Gulf Insurance Co.

However, he continues to take an active interest on the state of the economy and the stock market in particular.

During his tenure at the AFM, he put all his efforts in reviving the market, which eventually bore fruit, after a long period of checkered decline.

He told *The Star* that one of the ways for achieving that was the focus on encouraging foreign investments.

"This importance should be underlined, especially in time when stock prices reached their lowest point and the volume of dealings was declining."

"If we manage to attract foreign investors, who are qualified and well experienced, he elaborates, then such would be an achievement by itself."

Obviously any investor has the full choice of where to invest, but if he comes to Jordan, this becomes significant, and would create tangible results.

Added to this, foreign investors are marked by their big financial contributions, that form an important weight especially since they manage pension or investment funds. "It also provides the market with a wide base of liquidity."

Al Shaer, continues to say, that bearing this in mind "I did my utmost to contact foreign investors to make them acquainted of all the data they need on investment opportunities in Jordan." Also, he now calls on the government to provide any kind of support to this respect and organize investment conferences overseas. But Al Shaer who took over the management of the AFM at a crucial time, adds, "we were able to achieve

tremendous success after participating in the London conference on 15 May 1997, which was hosted by the United Bank of Switzerland and attended by more than 70 investment companies, among them representatives of eight Jordanian companies."

This conference, which was also attended by the Minister of Industry and Trade, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (Michael Marto who is today the head of the Supervisory Committee of the AFM) and Adel Al Qudha, head of the Privatization Unit at the Prime Ministry, enabled local companies' representatives to meet face to face with their counterparts, talk about the state of business in Jordan and responded to all inquiries provided by foreign investors.

Such participation has brought tangible and immediate results, as more than \$100 million were pumped into the market in the form of foreign investments. Accordingly, the Kingdom's reserve of foreign currencies jumped to level high.

But what annoys the financial expert is the government's response to an invitation from ING Bearings Bank to host a similar conference in New York. "I was disappointed by the response of the deputy prime minister who at the time asked me to decline the offer, but I still can't find an explanation for this," Al Shaer says.

"Al Shaer wishes all the success to the new management committee of the AFM and stresses that the draft of the new Securities Law which was approved temporarily on 15 May last year (in accordance with the approved Companies Law opens the door for a grave development at the AFM and promises great prosperity."

The separation between the supervisory role of the capital market from the bourse's role creates flexibility and prevents contradictory objectives. Supervision is basically concerned with imposing right measures in dealings to protect investors, while

the nature of the bourse and its management is distinguished with commercial practices, that aim at increasing profitability. This justifies the need for an independent supervision," Al Shaer says.

He expects a turning point within the coming two years, because of the law and the new management.

More foreign investments are essential, he says, and pointing out that the privatization programs embarked on by the government won't be successfully executed except through attracting foreign investors.

"This issue is within reach and at a short time. This is added to establishing investment institutions such as investment and saving funds, insurance companies, and banks among others."

All these tools will enable Jordanian investors to build big capitals and be qualified to buy shares of local public companies that are subject to privatization measures.

The financial expert points to another important issue to be taken into consideration.

"All supervisory activities must be united under one umbrella to include supervision of securities and saving funds (which Al Shaer says are now affiliated to the CBJ), the insurance sector (which is being reorganized and a new law is to be endorsed soon) and the banking sector."

This is based on international experience and applies to Jordan's small-sized economy.

Experience has proved in Europe, Asia and the Arab World (Jordan included) that the basic interest of the Central Bank is to focus on monetary policy, bridging confidence in the banking system and the exchange rate of the dinar, rather than on imposing supervision on the safety of the management of the banking sector.

If this happens, then the Central Bank will naturally be lenient in its supervisory measures, for it will be



Al Shaer

busy in other tasks and obligations.

Mr Al Shaer who holds a Bachelor of Economics from London University started his career as a chartered accountant affiliated to the Chartered Accountants Association in Britain in 1964. Later, he established Al Shaer Company for Accounting, Auditing, Studies and Consultations in Beirut after teaching in the American University in 1966. This company opened branches in Jordan, the Gulf, Lebanon and Europe.

Then it merged with Anhur Andersen, the biggest accounting company in the world.

In 1996, Al Shaer switched to another field becoming a director of the AFM.

He was the first chairman of the Auditing Association which was established in 1988, a member in the Royal Committee of the National Charter and a member in the Consultative Council of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Business Chronicle

Interest rates and investments, what kind of relationship?

THE LATEST measures adopted by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) to reduce interest rates were applauded by many investors. They expected such a step to be positive to increase investment in enterprises and boost productivity.

However, so far there is no tangible results, some investors now argue that the CBJ should oblige commercial banks to cut interest rates to encourage depositors to withdraw their savings and switch to carrying out projects. Since about four years, the CBJ has embarked on a strategy to maintain high interest rates—as high as 11 percent—to prevent dinar devaluation and maintain a satisfactory reserve of foreign currencies.

But such a decision motivated investors to increase their deposits and avoid investment in the Amman Financial Market (AFM).

Some investors justified their choice by saying that the return on deposits is guaranteed, while dividend on stocks in enterprises, is risky and doesn't provide sufficient yield. Such investments are, in their consideration, a venture that is also subject to market swings.

But as the CBJ realized this, and after achieving its target through a tough monetary policy that maintained foreign reserves at \$1.6 billion, it started to gradually reduce the discount and interest rates, expand the level of liquidity, encourage investment and boost finance for the private sector.

However, some analysts say these measures are yet to bear fruit. They are pessimistic and maintain that such a decision could create instability because depositors will now withdraw their money and invest outside the Kingdom.

This means more capital flight, because investors—despite the steps taken to promote local investments—see the environment as discouraging. Also, these investors argue that if bank deposits are taken out, then this will leave a negative effect on the size of its reserve.

This indeed may force the CBJ to take a U turn and raise interests up again. What really bothers investors is the general political developments in the region and their influence on the investment and business trends in the market. The AMF is seen as a barometer that reflects economic and political changes.

All these unstable factors including the Iraqi situation and the obstacles imposed by Israel on trade exchange between Jordan and the Palestinian territories affect the general mood in the market and make investors think twice before pumping their funds into risky projects or hold shares at the AFM.

Despite all, other investors, though few, say that there is still room for optimism. Hoping that interest rates to be lowered to 8.5 percent or even less than their former level in 1980s, they stress, that sooner or later the reduction of interest rates by the CBJ and other banks would bear fruit. They say that depositors will withdraw their money looking for other ways to employ their capital. Also other investors willing to carry out productive projects who don't have sufficient finance, would opt to borrow from banks.

Above all, what is needed for equilibrium in the market is for the CBJ to carry out steps to lift restrictions on financial facilities. This means that the reduction of interest rates must not be limited to deposits but also to loans.

Arab Bank to double its capital to JD 88 million

AMMAN, (Star)—The board of directors of the Arab Bank are to double the bank's capital from JD 44 million to 88 million to become the ever biggest financial institution in Jordan.

Sources at the bank disclosed that the capital increase will be through capitalization of the reserves and distribution of a free bonus share for shareholders. So the capital will be in the form of 8,800,000 shares. The par share value will be JD 10.

The Arab Bank, which is considered among the giant banking institutions in the Arab World, has earlier increased its capital from JD 22 million to JD 44 million. This was also through the distribution of a free bonus shares among subscribers.

The latest decision comes in line with the latest developments in the international banking market to expand its capital base. This is besides enhancing the financial status of the bank.

Total shareholders' rights in the Arab Bank reached about \$1.5 billion, and the



bank's management plans to raise them to about \$2 billion. Its assets are more than JD 13 billion.

The Arab Bank is distinguished by its advanced banking services all over the world including its operating branches in Palestine.

Seeking to go on in introducing developed banking and financial services, the Arab Bank has lately established the Capital Guarantee Fund for investors who are willing to invest their money without any possibility of losses.

The annual budget of the bank revealed that it has generated high profits in 1997, 15 percent higher over 1996. The share of the Arab Bank, which has skyrocketed last year has led to a noticeable rise in stock dealings at the Amman Financial Market (AFM). The official indicator recorded a 10 percent increase.

Observers expect the price of the Arab Bank share to reach over JD 400, which will cast its shadow over the general mood at the AFM.

Minding your own business

Clearing the corporate minefield

By Tom Linton reports

MIKE JAGUES doesn't exactly go looking for trouble, but these days he has plenty on his plate. Not that he's complaining. He usually welcomes it, for the company he founded 12 years ago specialises in offering logistical support to organizations operating in some of the most difficult and hostile areas known to man.

Jaques, a former teacher of outdoor pursuits and member of the British Antarctic Survey, had always wanted to make more than just a living from his speciality.

At the age of 30, he decided to try marketing his services and gathered five like-minded people around him, former Royal Marine commandos and a fellow member of the British Antarctic Survey. Each put in £1,500 to start the business. Before long, they had to top that up with another £1,500 to keep it ticking over.

"We started totally cold without any contacts. Our timing was bad as well. There was a pretty severe oil recession at the time and that was the industry we were looking to supply with support services," Jaques says. "If the truth were told, it was something we fancied doing and so we kidded ourselves that there was a market for our services. There was, of course, but we had to develop it."

"We had to point out to companies that if they allowed us to look after their peripheral activities, they could concentrate on what they did best. The first two years were pretty lean."

So lean, in fact, that in its first year Exploration Logistics turned over only £5,000. The second year wasn't much better, either. By then, three of the six shareholders had decided to cut their losses and dropped out.

In order to ensure survival beyond the second year, the best course was to sell 40 percent of the company to Gresham House, a venture capital organization.

Now Exploration Logistics has a turnover of nearly £5 million and a client list of blue-chip companies and government organizations.

Last year, it exercised its option to buy out Gresham House. "I must say, they were always excellent in their dealings with us," Jaques says. "They didn't interfere. They left us to run the business. Mind you, they eventually did quite well out of it, but so have we."

Jaques is not sure what persuaded Gresham House to put money into the company. "We had hardly any clients to show for knocking on a lot of doors and the prospects weren't good. But they seemed to like us and I sometimes wonder if they regarded us as an amusing flatter."

The additional capital helped to tide the company over until things did improve. "There was no real turning point no lucky break or big client to give us impetus. The big clients came later. It was all down to

perseverance. Maybe Gresham realized that we would get there in the end."

The company's first contract was to provide medical support on a gig run by a German company on Spitzbergen Island in the Arctic. "We supplied a paramedic on contract who spent two seasons there. Working in sub-zero temperatures on a rig can be hazardous and so you need a constant medical presence. Our man doubled up as a radio operator and used to do polar bear watch."

"He used to go out with a rifle and fire it in the air. Spitzbergen is heaving with polar bears; they come into the camps to scavenge. There was no question of shooting them because they are protected."

Providing medical support is a large part of the company's business. People working on rigs or seismic surveys can suffer terrible injuries if a hawser snaps or a man slips while working with drill pipe. The paramedic's job is to stabilize the injured person's condition and increase his chances of surviving until he can be airlifted to hospital. It is important to do all the right things as soon as possible during what is termed the "golden hour".

"Most of our paramedics are former services medical technicians. They have usually seen service on the battlefield and are used to treating serious injuries in arduous conditions. They have to be very competent. They have a telephone link to our medical consultant in Britain who will advise them on anything tricky and talk them through it."

The company also supplies mine-clearing services in many parts of the world. It has worked in Bosnia and Laos and has had a team in Kuwait for two years clearing up oil installations after the Gulf war.

Many of the people working in the field are former members of the armed forces employed on contract. "Most of them are supplied by a specialist agency and come to us by recommendation," Jaques says. "We have refined the business of recruit-

ing staff so that our people have all the right attributes for work requiring a great deal of initiative. They also have to be a good company representative."

The company is developing a security arm which specializes in advisory work and contingency planning rather than in supplying security personnel. "Some parts of the world are difficult to work in. Apart from theft, which is rife in some countries, and occasional sabotage, we have to deal with political unrest, hijacking and ambushes."

"Our men are not armed. They work in conjunction with the local police and armed forces. They have to be extremely diplomatic, yet they need to exert themselves without being confrontational. They have to achieve a successful outcome for the client."

"A lot of the work involves looking at security arrangements and designing procedures to protect the smooth running of the business. The security operation should prevent incidents which could lose a client time and money," Jaques says.

Exploration Logistics has developed an adjunct to its security arm; this specializes in providing health and safety support. Again, it can save clients money and disruption by making sure safety procedures in remote areas without essential services are up to scratch.

"Twelve years on, and two of Jaques' original team are still with the company as directors. Its specialists have worked in 82 countries. It now has about 70 people in the field; 20 of those are permanently employed by the company. As far as Jaques is concerned, trouble can keep piling up. He and his colleagues are happy to deal with it."

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Financial Times Syndications

MARKET WATCH 27 January				
Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market				
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIMCO 6.67 Arab Investment 6.00 Bank of Jordan 4.52 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Pharm. Center 4.17 International Trade 3.70 East Investment Project 2.17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Investment 5.00 Arab Investment 3.53 National Columns Industry 3.45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Cable 4.90 Arab Jordan Investment 4.53 International Trade 3.57 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Investment 5.05 Jordan Trade 4.76 Arab Industry 4.08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yamook Investment 5.15 National Cable 5.45 Zana Investment 5.00 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank of Jordan 4.94 Jordan Investment Bank 4.83 Middle East Bank 3.85 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sight & Sound 5.48 Arab Investment 5.26 Bank of Jordan 5.19 	
General Price Pointers 167,390	164,230	167,860	166,820	
Trade Volume 902709	883951	766432	371225	
Stock Volume 538954	551680	369082	332429	
Highest Traded Stocks				
Arab Bank 276270	Arab Bank 269980	Arab Bank 231540	Arab Bank 68930	

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The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Online

<http://www.arabia.com/star>

The Clinton Saga: Trails and tribulations

On tapes, Lewinsky describes alleged trysts with president



Monica Lewinsky

By Kathy Sawyer and Susan Schmidt

WASHINGTON—In an affidavit given on 7 January, Monica Lewinsky said she and President Clinton never had a sexual relationship. But in more than 20 hours of conversations with Linda R. Tripp, a supposed friend who was secretly taping her, Lewinsky described an 18-month involvement that included late-night trysts at the White House featuring oral sex.

Few journalists have heard even a portion of these audio tapes, which include one made under the auspices of the FBI. Lewinsky herself has not commented on the tapes publicly. And yet they have been the subject of numerous news accounts and the fodder for widespread speculation. Following are descriptions of key discussions recorded on the tapes, information that *The Post* has obtained from sources who have listened to portions of them.

The sources have characterized Lewinsky's moods as ranging from excitement to school-girlish purling and jealousy, from whining to bitterness and emotional devastation, but such judgments based on an audiotape are open to debate.

Her statements represent unheated assertions and allega-

tions. At one point in the tapes, Lewinsky says she has been brought up to tell lies in order to get along in life.

Clinton's attorney, Robert S. Bennett, would not address the specific graphic descriptions in the tapes Saturday, but chastised the media for reporting such salaciousness. "I'm very disappointed that *The Washington Post*, one of the preeminent newspapers in the country, is becoming a tabloid paper," he said. "Next we'll be buying it in supermarkets."

Lewinsky suggests to Tripp that she and the president had been having a genuine romance. She grows emotionally distraught, crying audibly during talks with Tripp through the fall of 1997, as the president begins to distance himself from her. Lewinsky is crushed when she begins to suspect that Clinton is turning his attentions to other women. This change in their relationship has been triggered by published reports of his possible harassment of another employee, Kathleen Willey.

But, as Lewinsky's physical encounters with the president diminish, her bouts of "phone sex" over the lines between the White House and her apartment at the Watergate increase, she tells Tripp.

After she is transferred from the White House to a Pentagon job, Lewinsky shows her increasing bitterness, referring to Clinton as "the creep." She wants to move back to the White House. Tripp asks her in what capacity. "Special assistant to the president for (oral sex)," Lewinsky answers.

Lewinsky also acknowledges that she had become known around the White House as "the Stalker" because she was always trying to get close to Clinton.

Lewinsky tells Tripp that she has an article of clothing with Clinton's semen on it. She speaks of exchanging other gifts and letters with the president.

Lewinsky tells Tripp that she (Lewinsky) intends to deny any sexual relationship when she is deposed by Paula Jones's lawyers. "Look," she says, "I will deny it so he will not get screwed in the case, but I'm going to get screwed personally," Tripp responds. "This is sick, this is sick."

At another point, Lewinsky says that if she had to tell Clinton she has shared her guilty secret with Tripp, "I'm just going to (expletive) kill myself." The women discuss a plan to have Tripp injure her foot and be hospitalized at the time of the Jones case deposition. Lewinsky breaks off to take a call from her mother, Marcia Lewis. Returning to her conversation with Tripp, she says her mother "understands why you think it's necessary to tell the truth. She said (the plan) to avoid the deposition by having an accident is brilliant."

In a discussion of whether there is any hard evidence against them, Lewinsky says: "Nobody saw him give me any of those things, and nobody saw anything happen between us."

Tripp: "Are you positive that nobody saw you in the study?"

Lewinsky: "I'm absolutely positive."

Tripp suggests they might subpoena phone records. "I'm sure he calls on some sort of special phone," Lewinsky responds. "You know he got caught once (by using a regular phone)."

On another tape, sources said, Lewinsky tells Tripp that Clinton has urged her not to worry about the Jones case because Jones' lawyers "are out going to find out about you." Then, when she is contacted by Jones' lawyers in mid-December, she calls the president and asks, "What do I do?" One source paraphrased the president's response, as conveyed by Lewinsky: "You must deny this."

The president tells Lewinsky he is sending attorney Vernon E. Jordan Jr., his close friend, over to talk to her. She says she told Jordan she was worried about lying, asking, "What if they catch me?" He told her, she says, that they don't send

people to jail for perjury in civil cases. Lewinsky also talks in one tape about giving Clinton and Jordan a list of New York public relations firms where she would like to work, sources said.

On a more recent tape, sources said, Lewinsky again pleads with Tripp to tell Jones' lawyers under oath that Lewinsky did not have an intimate relationship with Clinton and to disavow Tripp's own earlier eyewitness account in the Willey matter. (Lewinsky also provided Tripp with a set of written talking points to buttress her testimony exonerating Clinton.)

It was this emotional encounter with Lewinsky that prompted Tripp to contact authorities and turn over her tapes, sources said. The next day, 13 January, Tripp was at a hotel at the Pentagon City shopping mall, talking to Lewinsky while wearing a wire for the FBI.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Jordan gives beleaguered President his Presence

By Ruth Marcus and Thomas B. Edsall

WASHINGTON—During nearly every crisis of the Clinton presidency, Vernon E. Jordan Jr. has been a constant, though largely invisible, presence. Thursday, the 62-year-old lawyer again came to the aid of President Clinton, this time standing front and center with a public statement that may be the best news the beleaguered president has had in two dreary days.

At 3:30 p.m., Jordan walked into a crowded meeting room at the Park Hyatt hotel here to make his first comment on the allegations that a 24-year-old former White House intern had an affair with Clinton and was then advised by the president and Jordan to lie about it.

The gaggle of reporters and camera crews fell silent. The 6-foot-4 Jordan, impeccably tailored as usual in a gray suit, maroon tie and gold tie bar anchoring his white-collared shirt, smiled ever so slightly, as if assessing the crowd and deciding he could take them on.

"May I have your attention? My name is Vernon Jordan," he said, knowing full well that every person in the room was acutely aware of who was at the lectern. Without hesitation, Jordan then launched into his account of his dealings with Monica Lewinsky. He took no questions, and when he left through the wrong door and was forced to walk back through the room—looked

more bemused than flustered as the frustrated press corps kept trying for more.

In crisp, declarative sentences, Jordan in many ways did a better job for Clinton than the president had done for himself the day before with his halting and incomplete account of his dealings with Lewinsky.

Punching out each word for emphasis, Jordan provided help to Clinton on two critical points. "I want to say absolutely and unequivocally that Ms. Lewinsky told me in no uncertain terms that she did not have a sexual relationship with the president," he said. "At no time did I ever say, suggest or intimate to her that she should lie."

Putting himself in the line of fire in a way few lawyers would advise, Jordan promised to testify "directly, completely and truthfully" about the matter before the grand jury convened by Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr, whom Jordan said had subpoenaed him to appear.

Some Washington lawyers said Thursday that Jordan was being foolhardy in agreeing to testify before knowing what other evidence prosecutors have in hand, even if he has nothing to hide. But the alternative scenario—Jordan staffing Starr's efforts to question him or even invoking his Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination—would have been politically and possibly legally devastating for Clinton, making it look as if one of his

closest advisers had something to hide.

Instead, Jordan tried to portray his dealings with Lewinsky as business as usual for him.

Yes, he said, he had tried to help Lewinsky find a job, referring her to two companies where he serves on the boards of directors. Yes, when Lewinsky was subpoenaed in the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit, he found a lawyer for her, and even personally escorted Lewinsky to the lawyer's office to introduce them.

It was a remarkable description of one of the most powerful of Washington power brokers going out of his way for a lowly and—until this week—largely unknown administration underling. Jordan said he interceded for Lewinsky, who was then working at the Pentagon, at the request of Clinton's secretary, Betty Currie. But he didn't explain why Currie was helping a woman who had left the White House 20 months earlier or whether he had talked to Clinton himself about Lewinsky.

To put his intercession into perspective, Jordan described himself as a believer in the biblical admonition, "To whom much is given, much is required." A former civil rights leader who now serves on 11 corporate boards and earns an estimated \$1 million a year as a partner in one of Washington's leading law firms, he portrayed the help he gave Lewinsky as merely the latest example of how he uses his power to do good.

"I was pleased to be helpful to Ms. Lewinsky, whose drive, ambition and personality were impressive," Jordan said.

Friends of Jordan said he has quickly helped a number of people, both big players and "little cheees," as one put it, obtain jobs in the administration and land comfortably on leaving public service.

Since his brief stint as co-chairman of Clinton's transition team, the public glimpses of Jordan have been of the golfing partner, happily driving his friend around the course on Martha's Vineyard, or the Christmas Eve reveler continuing the tradition of dinner with the president and first lady.

But he also has been a quiet presence at the White House. "Whenever there's a problem, Vernon's around to help," one senior official said in 1994, describing the bond between Clinton and Jordan as the two played round after round of golf on Martha's Vineyard.

When former associate attorney general Webster L. Hubbell was forced to resign amid allegations that he embezzled from his former law firm, Jordan stepped in to get him a \$100,000 consulting contract. When White House deputy counsel Vincent Foster committed suicide, Jordan joined Clinton and the first lady at the Foster home and stayed up with the grieving president until 2 a.m.

"The last thing he'd ever do is betray a friendship," Clinton told the New York Times in 1996. "It's good to have a friend like that."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

An Internship of unusual access

By Amy Goldstein and John Mintz

WASHINGTON—Lisa Jennings remembers the heart-thumping surge on those rare days when she would overhear that President Clinton was to walk past Room 145 of the Old Executive Office Building, where she and the half-dozen other interns of the White House advance office toiled in obscurity. "POTUS is coming. POTUS is coming," she said, using the internal White House lingo for the President of the United States.

Such fleeting glimpses of power, witnessed by Jennings during her five-month internship in 1995, are a marked contrast to the girls, telephone calls and public hugs that Clinton allegedly showered on Monica Lewinsky, the former White House intern who has claimed to have had a sexual relationship with him.

Judging by their own experiences, a variety of former White House interns said, the treatment Lewinsky says she received from Clinton's friends and aides sounded nothing like their own lowly status in the White House's typically rigid hierarchy.

"There was no interaction at all," said Michelle Von Ew, 23, who worked near Lewinsky during her own 1995 internship in the office of presidential letters and messages. "We were in the basement of the Old Executive Office Building, and we did our job. I'm pretty sure we weren't supposed to hound senior officials if we ran into them."

But for Lewinsky, life as an intern meant exchanges of gifts with the president. According to sources, Clinton has

given her a dress, a pin, souvenirs from Iraq and a copy of the Walt Whitman book of poetry, *Leaves of Grass*.

She reciprocated, giving the president several presents that included the necktie he wore to the State of the Union address last year. Lewinsky said. From early October to early December of last year, sources said, she sent him at least eight packages of varying sizes by courier from her job at the Pentagon.

They displayed their familiarity in other ways, too. At a White House reception last year, witnesses said, Clinton saw Lewinsky across the room and strode over to embrace her. Like some of the 1,000 interns taken in by the White House each year—in classes of 250 at a time—Lewinsky was hired on the recommendation of a family friend. In her case, the recommendation came from Walter Kaye, a wealthy retired insurance executive who has been a large contributor to the Democratic Party.

After about six months as an intern starting in the summer of 1995, she was given a permanent job in December 1995 handling correspondence at the Office of Legislative Affairs. According to a White House spokesman, the offer of a paying job was not itself exceptional; about one-quarter of the interns stay on in full-time positions.

She left in April 1996 after supervisors feared she was somehow infatuated with Clinton. Even after she started a new job as an aide to the Defense Department's top spokesman, she returned to the White House numerous times and was "waved in" by the president's secretary, Betty

Currie.

She also has said she has been in frequent telephone contact with the president. Lewinsky told her friend Linda R. Tripp, who it turned out was secretly taping her, that the president called her often. Tripp also has said she listened to a voice-mail message at Lewinsky's home left by a man whose voice closely resembles the president's.

After she was subpoenaed by lawyers for Paula Jones on 17 December, Lewinsky said on the tapes, she called Clinton for advice. He told her he would send his close friend, Washington lawyer Vernon E. Jordan Jr., to advise her further. Lewinsky said in the tapes. In fact, Jordan did help her, picking her up in his car at one point and recommending she retain lawyer Francis Carter.

Jordan furnished her with another form of help, as well. After she gave Clinton and Jordan a list of New York companies where she would like to work in public relations, Jordan placed telephone calls to arrange a round of job interviews.

Jordan was not the only one who intervened.

White House officials have acknowledged that John D. Podesta, the deputy chief of staff, and Currie, one of Clinton's personal secretaries, arranged an interview for her with UN Ambassador Bill Richardson, who met her for breakfast one day last fall at the Watergate, where she lived. He offered her a public-affairs job, but she turned him down, saying she would prefer work in the corporate world.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Literary agent was behind secret tapes

By David Streitfeld and Howard Kurtz

WASHINGTON—The woman who surreptitiously taped former White House intern Monica Lewinsky talking about an alleged affair with President Clinton did so at the suggestion of her literary agent, a fierce critic of Clinton.

Lucianne Goldberg, a friend of Linda R. Tripp, the former White House aide who did the taping, also helped bring the Lewinsky allegations to *Newsweek* magazine, according to a source with firsthand knowledge of the meeting.

Goldberg, 62, makes no secret of her anti-Clinton animus. "What I'm glad about is he's getting caught," she said of Clinton. "At something, if it took this to get him, fine."

She said she had been "furious" at newspaper coverage of Clinton for the last five years because journalists did not do enough about Whitewater. "Hillary's phony stock deal" and other allegations of corruption.

If the president's lawyer had attacked her credibility, the way he had Tripp's, Goldberg said, "I'd be on the lawn of the White House with a deer rifle." She added: "I'm a hero if this thing comes out the way my quote, agenda would like to see it come out."

Reporters often rely on news sources who have some personal or partisan axe to grind. Several of the sources who helped push the latest White House sex scandal into the mainstream media do not like Clinton or are his legal adversaries. An examination of their motivation adds a new layer to the complicated tale of where the story came from and how it burst into view.

The Democrats, for their part, are trying to make Goldberg an issue. The Democratic National Committee is taking to journalists a sheet of unflattering excerpts about the book agent—a high Goldberg's son Jonah called "a smear campaign against my mom." DNC spokesman Steve Langdon said that "what we have provided is already available publicly" and was faxed at the request of reporters.

The news stories could not have been written without some help from the office of independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr, who is

investigating the Lewinsky matter. In fact, *Newsweek* has said that it delayed its story on the matter at Starr's request, who feared his undercover probe would be compromised.

Other apparent sources are the attorneys for Paula Jones, who are affiliated with the conservative Rutherford Institute. It was Jones' sexual harassment suit against Clinton that produced the depositions in which both the president and Lewinsky denied having an affair—sealed depositions to which only the lawyers in the case had access.

This is not the first time Goldberg has been involved in presidential politics. She worked for Lyndon Johnson during the 1960 presidential campaign. "When you're tall, thin, blond and have big boobs, you can have any job you want," she told *People* magazine in 1992. She later worked in President Kennedy's press office.

Goldberg sold political intelligence to Republican operative Murray Chotiner, a confidant of President Nixon, during the 1972 election, when Goldberg was traveling as a reporter on George McGovern's campaign plane.

Raised in Alexandria, Va., she wrote a gossip column in high school, went to George Washington University and worked at *The Washington Post* as a copy aide in the late 1950s.

Her biggest success as a literary agent was a book by former detective Mark Fuhrman, a controversial figure from the O.J. Simpson murder trial. It was a No. 1 best seller. She also has represented a woman named Dolly



Linda R. Tripp

Kyle Browning in trying to sell a thinly fictionalized account of an alleged romantic relationship with Clinton. Goldberg also represented Arkansas state troopers who wanted to write a book about their allegations of Clinton's womanizing when he was governor. Neither project was taken on by a publisher.

Goldberg first began representing Tripp on a proposed book about Vincent Foster, the White House deputy counsel who committed suicide in 1993. Goldberg had been looking for information about Foster for another client, and conservative columnist Tony Snow suggested that she meet Tripp. Tripp, who worked in the White House counsel's office, was one of the last people to see Foster alive.

When they met, Tripp said she wanted to write her own book. "It wasn't as racy as Gary Aldrich," said Goldberg, referring to the former FBI agent assigned to the White House whose memoir related gossip that the president was sneaking out at night for liaisons. But she said the administration "wouldn't have been happy."

Tripp's project never materialized. Tripp grew angry at the White House when Clinton attorney Robert Bennett challenged her credibility after she was quoted in a *Newsweek* story last summer. Tripp had spoken on the record to *Newsweek* reporter Michael Isikoff, saying she had seen another former White House aide, Kathleen Willey, emerge from the Oval Office with her lipstick smeared and clothing askew.

Tripp told Goldberg about Lewinsky, a colleague at the Pentagon and a former White House intern who said she was having an affair with the president. Goldberg advised Tripp to tape Lewinsky, to convince Isikoff of the story's authenticity.

Isikoff would never have believed the story about Monica, Goldberg said. "Tripp" said, "What can I do? I don't have pictures, I

don't have corroboration," I said. "You need to prove it. You've got to tape."

The tapes turned out to be crucial to Starr's investigation of whether Clinton lied under oath about the alleged affair or urged Lewinsky to lie about it. Tripp subsequently made other tapes of Lewinsky after Starr's office wired her with a body mike for a rendezvous with Lewinsky.

Goldberg said that tabloids have offered her as much as \$2 million for copies of the tapes. "It's all very surreal," she said. "I don't have anything to sell. It's an agent's nightmare."

Describing herself as a "friend" of Tripp, Goldberg said: "This is someone who revered the White House. She thought it was Heaven on Earth under [George] Bush... But suddenly it was taken over by these hordes of kids who played basketball in the hall and wore jeans to work. She's a proper lady."

According to the source with firsthand knowledge, Goldberg accompanied Tripp to a meeting last fall with Isikoff at the Adams-Morgan home of Jonah Goldberg. At that meeting, the source said, Tripp talked about Lewinsky's allegations and offered to play one of the first tapes she made of telephone conversations with Lewinsky, but Isikoff declined to hear the tape.

In weighing whether to publish the Isikoff piece last weekend, *Newsweek* President Richard Smith said in an interview earlier this week that he took into account that one key source was "opposed to the president." Said Isikoff: "Whatever the motivation of the sources, my primary concern was checking out the truth of the information."

Said Goldberg: "If there had been an organized conservative conspiracy, it never would have happened. If they couldn't do it in five years, they couldn't have done it now. It's not like they haven't been trying. You can't orchestrate this stuff. You can't make it up. There is a God."

Asked if Tripp plans to write a book, Goldberg said: "I hope she'll do one, if she isn't so demoralized by it all."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Chenais

Internet facilitates adoption love connection

By Matthew McAllester

SLEEP WASN'T coming easily to Katrina Keith on this cold December night. The gas fire roaring, she sat at her desk and looked out through the window at the skyscrapers and mountains of Vancouver, British Columbia. At a loss, she logged on to the Internet. Moments later, her restless mind was focused. Like a bunter with a deer in her sights, something had caught her eye. Someone, in fact.

"There was one photograph of a little girl who kind of just jumped out at me," said Keith, 27, a television and film production designer who had already decided she wanted to adopt a child and was searching for information about adoption. "I e-mailed the agency first of all, introducing myself and telling them why I was on the Net and that this little girl had caught my eye. They e-mailed me back and a week later sent me a video of this little girl."

It was love.

If all goes according to plan, there's an 8-year-old girl living in a town in southern Russia who will soon be calling Vancouver home and Keith "Mommy."

Keith's discovery on the Internet of the girl who could become her daughter is one of hundreds of similar match-ups that are changing the way many adoptions are set in motion, adoption agencies and experts say. Agencies around the country are launching self-promotional Web sites, many featuring photo listings and descriptions of American and foreign children who are currently available for adoption.

Many agency workers and adoptive parents are heralding the online world as a godsend, offering information, support groups and, most important, a place to make connections between children needing families—many with special needs—and parents longing to give a child a happy home.

"What the Internet has done is to make it much easier to look at the kids and say,

"Hey, I love that kid," said Carol Foster, program director of the Angels Haven Outreach agency in Hanover, N.H., which relies solely on its Web site to connect parents with children and has made 35 such matches in the past four months. "All of a sudden a child becomes real. If there's a cleft palate, you can just look at the eyes and your position about things changes. Those children have just a gazillion more chances."

But to some adoption experts, the Internet's increasingly common role as the catalyst for adoption brings with it serious hazards. Chief among the concerns these experts have is the online galleries of available children, which they say can work to turn these little human beings into cuteness packages that can hinder a prospective parent's ability to make rational decisions.

"We call it the home shopping network," said Thais Tepper, director of the Parent Network for the Post-Institutionalized Child, an advocacy and support group based in Washington, Pa., for parents who have adopted children from other countries. "You look at the pictures of the little kids and you go, 'That's the one I want.' You wouldn't buy property (over the Internet). You wouldn't buy a car sight unseen. But you will fall in love with a picture of a child and that is lifelong."

Given the large and fluctuating numbers of adoption agencies and the state-by-state regulation of adoption, it is hard to gauge what percentage of adoptions in the United States are now conceived on or facilitated by the Internet. But anecdotally, the evidence suggests that the Internet is transforming the adoption process. Many adoption agencies say they have experienced sudden growth since launching sites. For example, one small nonprofit agency in Utah had only six clients per year when it put up its Web site in June. Now it has 35 clients. And about a third of the parents

who come to Tepper's group for support have found their adopted children through the Net.

"It's presumably at least in the hundreds," said Christine Adamec, who has written several books on adoption and has one adopted child and two biological children.

For Keith, the Internet was never meant to be the place where she would find a daughter. Her Russian heritage steered her toward adopting a Russian child. The Net was meant to be a place where she found out from other parents and experts about what health problems Russian children might have. Then she came across the photograph of the little girl that night in December as she visited the site of the Yvonne USA agency, a for-profit agency based in California that specializes in arranging adoptions of Russian children.

"To be honest, this is not what I planned," said Keith, who is currently undergoing her months-long home study—which involves background checks and intensive questioning—to ensure that she will provide a safe and stable home for the Russian girl. "It never would occur to me to look for a child on the Net. I was just looking for information."

But the emotional power of the photograph of the little girl grabbed her. "From her photo, maybe she reminded me of myself as a little girl," said Keith, who is learning Russian and wants to adopt because she believes it is a responsible way to start a family. "She looked kind of shy and on the video she sang a little song. There was something about her that immediately drew me to her."

It's that instant attachment that some experts champion and others warn against. "I just worry about the child," Adamec said. "It seems a little exploitative. They're not commodities. They're children, they're minors, they have no control over this. That's what bothers me. But on the other hand they need families."

Experts warn that the Internet poses dan-



Kathy and Raymond Hugh first met online and, after deciding to adopt, got advice from other adoptive parents on the Web. Photo by Phillip Davies.

gers to both adoptive parents and the children who come under their care.

"People share too much personal information about themselves" online, said Adamec, who advises people on America Online discussion groups to be a little reticent. "There's a false sense of intimacy. They don't realize many times these messages are archived forever and can be read by anyone. Some people adopt a foster child who might have been horribly abused and write in excruciating detail about the abuse. What if it's a 10-year-old child and they get on the Internet two years later and there's all this stuff?"

Sometimes, adoptive parents rely on old-fashioned agencies to locate available children but use the Internet as an inexhaustible source of information about how to navigate the stormy bureaucratic, financial and emotional oceans that adop-

tive parents face.

Kathy and Raymond Hugh of New Hyde Park, N.Y., had tried unsuccessfully for some time to have a child. "So instead of continuing to try endlessly we began on the Internet primarily to look at other people's adoption experiences," said Kathy Hugh, 44, a homemaker.

"Online there was valuable bureaucratic information," Hugh said. "Which piece of paper you need, and this is how long you need to do it in advance. All that. And emotional support for the parents."

The Hughs, who first met on America Online, often used the service's adoption message boards to find answers to their questions and to air their worries. Finally, after deciding they wanted to adopt a baby girl from China and having completed the rigorous home study that New York state requires all adoptive parents to undergo to

ensure their suitability as parents, they made a trip to China in April to collect their new daughter, 13-month-old Nan Hugh.

The moment they first held Nan in their arms, on 3 April, in the lobby of their hotel in China, is the kind of moment that Keith is trying hard not to get too excited about as she waits to find out if her adoption plans succeed. What she can't help feeling amazed about, though, is how she found the little girl in the first place.

"I'm blown away," Keith said. "I do use the Internet a lot. I shop off the Internet and e-mail order all my books and send e-mail fanatically, but I never ever even remotely considered it a place to connect with a future daughter or son."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Health hazards of mobile phones

Nothing but microwaves on the brain

By Clive Cookson

EVER SINCE mobile phones first reached the consumer market in the early 1980s, some users have been worried about harmful effects from the microwave radiation that transmits conversations between handset and base station. There have been many allegations about the phones doing damage, ranging from brain tumours to short-term memory loss, but no conclusive evidence either way.

The number of mobile phone subscribers worldwide is growing by 50 per cent a year and is expected to soar through the 200 million mark during 1998. (Already in Scandinavia one person in three is a regular user.) The phones are becoming so popular that even if the individual user has only a small chance of suffering any harm, the total impact on public health could be substantial.

So the world's health agencies are undertaking new research to assess the possible hazards. For example, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (based in Lyon, France) started a study this month to look for any link between brain tumours and long-term mobile phone use in eight countries. And the European Commission is expected to launch a large-scale research project later this year.

Until more evidence is published, how seriously should we take the risks?

Microwaves are theoretically capable of harming the human head. Like other forms of electromagnetic radiation, they can heat up body tissues and induce electrical currents. These effects might disrupt biochemical processes such as DNA or electrical activity in brain cells.

What is not clear is whether the energy levels delivered by mobile phones up to 1 watt, compared with 600 watts for a typical microwave oven, are high enough to cause trouble. The overall head heating effect is small (a fraction of a degree centigrade) but the localized impact might be significant.

Animal tests give some cause for concern. Researchers

in the US and Australia, who exposed rats to microwaves at levels similar to those emitted by mobile phones, detected an increased incidence of "cancer in the animals and signs of genetic damage in their cells. And rats became muddled and found it harder to navigate through a maze when microwaves were beamed at them. But other scientists have criticized the way these experiments were carried out and doubted their relevance for phone users.

In the US, there have been several lawsuits claiming that mobile phones caused brain tumours though none has been successful. This month an Australian cancer specialist attracted publicity for suggesting that a 50 per cent increase in the incidence of brain tumours in Western Australia between 1982 and 1992 might be linked to the growth in mobile phone use during the period, but he produced no formal evidence to exclude other factors that might have been responsible, such as improved diagnostic equipment.

If you think mobile phones may be hazardous but regard them as an essential tool for modern business or social life, what can you do to reduce the risk?

Various shielding devices are available, though they add to the phone's bulk and weight and may impair its performance. Or you could adopt the practice of one phone company, chief executive. He holds the phone in such a way that his fingers separate it from his ear with an air gap of an inch or so. This significantly cuts the microwave dose to the head, though it can make conversation difficult if reception is poor or the surroundings noisy.

Meanwhile, manufacturers are working to reduce the radiation output of their handsets. The people actually using mobile phones are not the only ones concerned about their health effects. Non-users are becoming increasingly worried about radiation from the cellular systems' base stations those

ugly transmitting towers that have sprouted up alongside main roads and railways over the past few years.

Although base stations irradiate people in their vicinity continuously with microwaves, the doses are far lower than those received by phone users from their handsets. On the other hand, people feel that a risk is much greater if they have no personal control over a

situation and if they do not understand the underlying science and technology.

Both factors make them anxious when base stations are built near their homes or schools. The fears are similar to those expressed by people living close to high-voltage power lines, who are exposed to low-frequency electromagnetic radiation that might conceivably cause cancer.

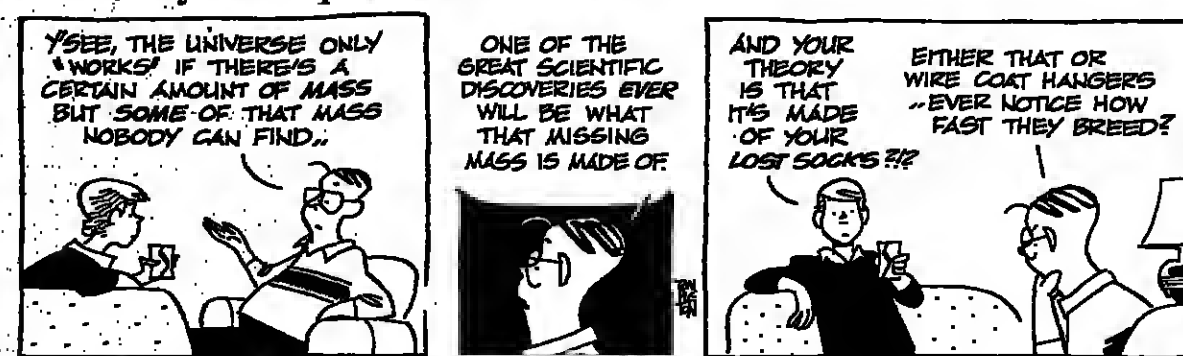
"No wonder that people who

do not own a mobile telephone may perceive the risk from mobile telephone base stations as unacceptable," Terence Lee, a psychology professor at St Andrews University in Scotland, told a recent World Health Organization conference. "There is a feeling of lack of control over the expansion of mobile telephone networks into communities."

It is important, however, not to get so carried away by con-

cern about the radiation risks that we ignore other more definite hazards of mobile phones. Probably the most immediate danger is that you will be injured or killed in a car crash because someone is simultaneously trying to drive and talk on a handset. At the same time as funding health studies of mobile communications, governments should ban their use while driving.

ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



NOOGIES by Bruce Plante



ROCK TRACKS

By Stacy Jenel Smith

There was a heavy contingent of rockers whose drug problems have been widely reported at the Sex Pistols' recent opening night at L.A.'s Universal Amphitheatre—including Scott Weiland of Stone Temple Pilots and Dave Gahan of Depeche Mode. Looking over the crowd, in fact, more than one was got into gallows humor about the guests on hand for the show, which kicked off with the band Goldfinger—and how many were lucky to be there, alive. If the Pistols had had their way, another notorious figure would have been present. When they learned that Rick James was just getting out of prison, the band issued him a personal invitation to join them. There was no response. Perhaps there is an argument that prison rehabilitation works after all.

Meanwhile, others on band for the affair included Brian Setzer, John Leguizamo, Ben Stiller, Traci Lords, John Enos and Billy Idol. John Taylor of Duran Duran and Matt Sorum and Duff McKagan of Guns N' Roses turned out to see Pistols' guitarist Steve Jones; you may recall those four play as the Neurotic Outsiders when not busy with their other bands. All were treated to typically rotten Johnny Rotten moments, such as when, annoyed by fans who threw coins at him on stage, he said, "The least you could do is throw bills, you wankers."

Get ready for the sleaziest side of the rock scene—and you know it's plenty sleazy—come October. That's when Pamela Des Barres' "Rock Bottom" book is due out. The tome is already being touted as a "Hollywood Babylon" of the music world. We can only speculate about how much inspiration Pamela may have derived from her ex, Michael Des Barres.

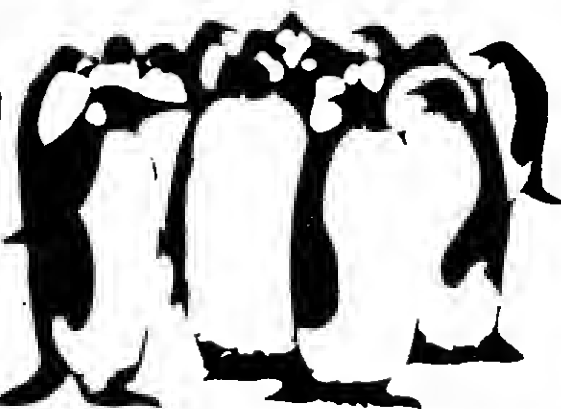
There'll also be a couple of new Doors CDs in stores come October. How, you ask, could they possibly have found yet another way to repackaged old goods from the acid rock band whose leader, Jim Morrison, died 25 years ago? Well, they have. The two new entries are "The Doors Absolutely Live," and another Doors' Greatest Hits album. "There is a double disc of greatest hits already. We're bringing out the single disc for those who can't afford the double," explains former Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek.

Manzarek's now busy with something different. He's linked up with beat poet Michael McClure, and the two are planning appearances together. First, they'll gig with poets Ted Joans and David Meltzer at the all-day beat exhibition at the Young Museum in San Francisco Oct. 12. Later, they'll be at New York City's Whitney Museum. "I interpret his poetry musically; it's very similar to what I did with (Jim) Morrison... a little blues where necessary, classical—I use everything." The two are also planning a video of their performance pieces, going under the title of "The Third Mind." Manzarek feels the beat is definitely back, daddy, and to prove it, he notes the proliferation of coffee houses across the land that offer poetry nights and music. "I think it's because young people are starved for a little intellect, which they don't find on TV.... We're living in a consumer culture, but there's a hunger among people saying 'feed my mind as well.' It's similar to what happened in the '50s."

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AROUND
TOWNA Ramadan evening
at the Inter-Con

AS PART of the Ramadan activities organized by Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan, a Ramadan evening was organized for the Elle Club members. Office Managers and Secretaries from the Elle Club attended the evening and they were given a tour of the hotel to get to know the hotel's new facilities. The ladies were very impressed with the facilities especially the Inter-Fit Health Spa. They also enjoyed the evening which included an entertainment program with lots of give-aways and presents. ■



Jazzing up Arabic and Flamenco music

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

Titled "From Arabia to Andalusia," last Thursday's concert performed at the Royal Cultural Center by a group of Freddy for Music teachers led by Iraqi guitarist Robert Michael revealed the Jordanian public how naturally Spanish and Arabic tunes, instruments and techniques could blend into a convincing dialogue beyond any cultural limit.

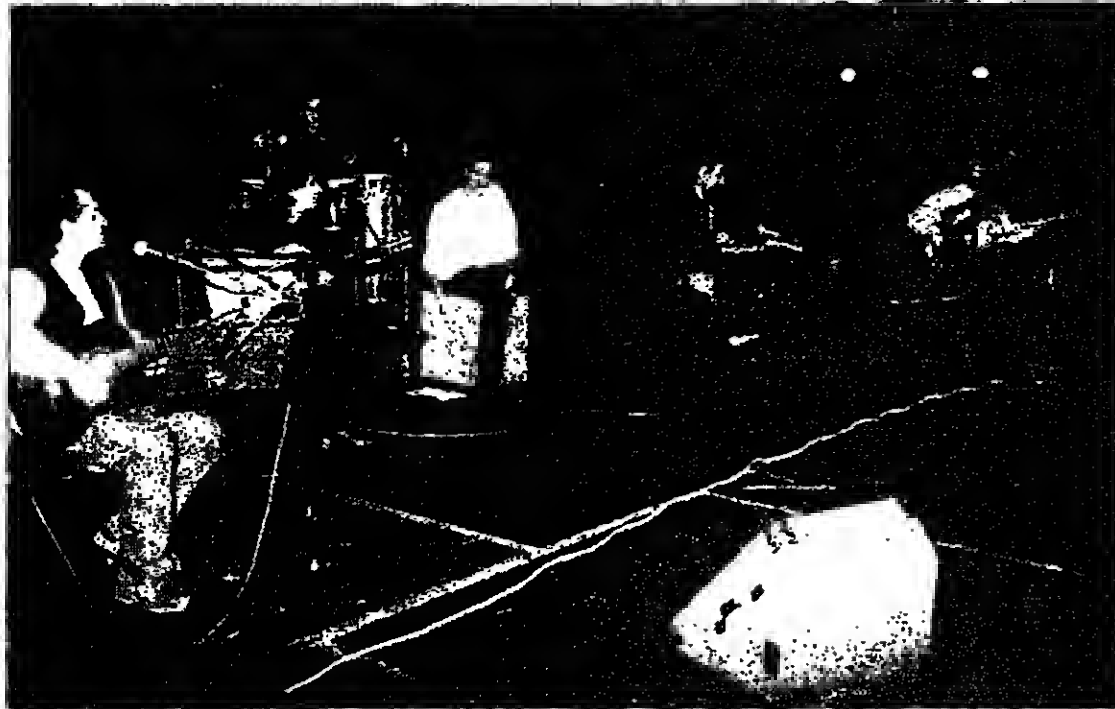
The unusual combination of instruments was the main attraction of the evening. At first sight, it seemed surprising to feature the traditional Arabic instrument "qanoun" (a soundboard provided with strings to be plucked with the fingers) alongside with a flamenco guitar accompanied by the Latin American percussion instrument "cajon", a "conga" and a bass guitar.

Nevertheless, the qanoun virtuoso, Iraqi Furst Qadouri knew how to make his instrument echo flamenco sonorities and answer back to the trills of Robert Michel's acoustic guitar, while the latter was moulding his high flamenco techniques on Arab varied melodious and rhythmic structures.

"What we tried to do was to simply blend traditional Arabic themes (be they Syrian, Jordanian, Egyptian or Iraqi) with Spanish and Latin American patterns," said Michael. "Focusing rather on certain melodic phrases than on full songs, we subscribe to the belief of famous Paco de Lucia and Vicente Amigo that there are no borders in music," he continues.

Convinced that an instrument is not designed only for an exclusive type of music, he finds challenging the attempt to invade other musical styles and techniques. According to him, not only such versatile instruments as classical guitar and piano, but also apparently more "restrictive" ones, like the violin or the qanoun, for instance, can be exploited in an innovative jazzy way.

"When we decided to call this concert 'From Arabia to Andalusia', I was bearing in mind the old story of Ziryab, an Iraqi musician that centuries ago left his native country for Cordoba to discover new rhythms and harmonies," Michael added. "I like to imagine what the tunes his ears must have captured during his trip through the



Mediterranean countries sounded like. It is this mixture of pieces and patches of Syrian, Greek, Turkish, North African and Spanish songs that I mean by 'From Arabia to Andalusia'," he explains.

The historical interaction between Spanish and Arabic music in Andalusia makes their "jazzing up" even more natural. Moreover, the flamenco traditional singing art included free style parts that allowed improvisation. In his opinion, improvising on instruments essentially resembles a "conversation". The performers are free to express whatever they think on a particular subject, on the condition they stick to the same "theme", he stresses, adding that "the more educated a person is, the more things he has to say."

The "themes" tackled by soloists Michael and qanoun player Qadouri on the rhythmic background created by the bass (Iraqi Shiraz Taminian) and percussionists (Jordanians Maher Hanhan and Ali Fanni) varied from South European and Latin American to Arabic and even Indian. Relaxed and happy, the music band

jazzed up slow rock themes, "rumba flamenco" and "largo flamenco" patterns, Iraqi "gewgina" and other Arab rhythms.

The repertoire included the vocal interpretation of three Iraqi songs by singer Arsham Baderian. Sung in the almost operatic fashion of traditional Armenian songs, "Yalli insectouna" (You all forgot about us), "Anna innain..." (Where am I from...) and "Bain Al anwar wal maghrib" (Between dusk and sun set) also allowed instrumental improvisations in the Georgian, slow rock and Gipsy style, respectively.

"We improvise only on stage," said Michael. "We discuss in advance the structure of a song and we choose the parts where we shall improvise," he underlines. "Sometimes, though, we happen to end up the song realizing that we skipped the improvisation. In this case, the improvisation comes later in a completely different place but in a more natural way," he said.

The rhythm section, that is the bass (melodic rhythm) and the percussions, is a basic ingredient in any improvisation on instruments. Very

satisfied with the "excellent job" done by Hanhan (conga) and Fanni (cajon), the leader of the group emphasized the importance of rhythm, the real backbone of the "combination".

Attending the concert, pianist and composer Agnes Bashir appreciated in particular Hanhan's sparkling performance on his conga. "It is amazing how he managed to alternate Oriental figures, as if performed on *tahla* and other typically Arab percussion instruments, with flamenco and Caribbean ones", she exclaims. She also admired the flamenco technique displayed for the first time on stage by the young cajon player Fanni.

Skilfully plucking the qanoun strings in Gipsy and "Bulerias" Spanish rhythms, Qadouri demonstrated that a traditional Arabic instrument (played by ever lesser performers nowadays) can play flamenco music in an absolutely natural way. "It is the first time I play Spanish music on my qanoun", he said. "It has been a very satisfying experiment and a very pleasant experience to perform in this concert," he went on, adding though that his main interest remains playing traditional Arabic music.

Graduated in qanoun from the Music Academy in Baghdad, Furst Qadouri confessed his great attachment to this "difficult" instrument and expressed his hope that this concert would raise the young public's interest in studying qanoun.

In his introduction to the performance, the director of the "Freddy for Music" Faculty, Mr Freddy Daoud, mentioned that "because nobody in Jordan seems to be keen on taking qanoun classes, we decided to organize a concert of improvisation on this very beautiful Arabic instrument, guitars and percussions."

This is the second concert shedding light on a particular Arabic instrument. "Last August we offered the public the opportunity to listen to the oud as accompanied by more familiar instruments", public relations agent, Ms Marry Danud points out. "We seek variety in our activities, as we want to please all musical tastes from classical to modern, as well as from Arabic to international music", she adds.

A similar concert of Spanish and Arabic music will be organized within three months. The teachers and performers will try to come up with more tunes that will be combined in a more comprehensive manner. ■

Egyptian jewelry

Houses of the Nile in Amman

By Koff Attah
Special to The Star

Jewels have fascinated man since the beginning of time, they are as some say a woman's best friend. For thousands of years, women have adorned themselves with jewelry. Their extreme beauty and traditional use as rich adornment is only paralleled by the satisfaction and admiration they give.

From Tutankhamun to Cleopatra, the charming Queen and from the creative ancient Egyptians in the modern business executive, Egypt's handcrafted jewelry has a long tradition as a means of accumulating wealth and a yardstick to measure a man's richness as well.

In the 20th century, the making and trading of jewelry has become a man's world.

But finally some determined Egyptian women have made the breakthrough, one of the leading women, for instance, is an artist. By introducing an into jewelry she has made a great name for herself.

The 45-year-old Egyptian artist, Azza Fahmy has exhibited her work in Egypt and abroad with great success. Her latest international exhibition took place at the Orient House Gallery in Shimsani.

The Orient House Gallery, situated at an elegant corner of Shimsani offers an unrivalled ser-

vice to artists. It's also well known for hosting a quality arts exhibition. No wonder, Azza Fahmy's Houses of the Nile collection was hosted here from 18-20 January.

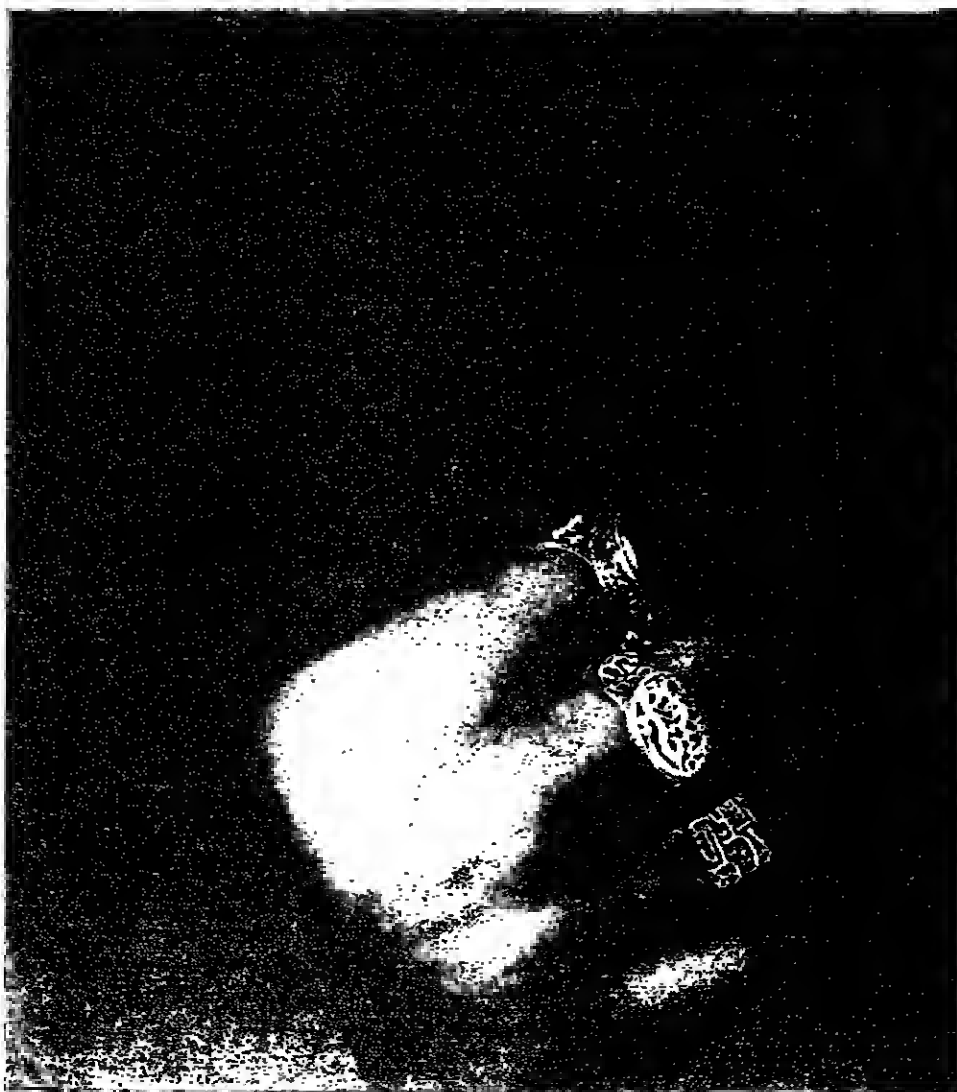
Although we've been organizing exhibitions such as paintings—the artistic collection of jewelry exhibition of Azza Fahmy is the first of its kind," says the assistant manager of the Gallery.

The jewels displayed are made mainly of silver and gold. The designs are shaped after Egyptian peasant jewelry or inspired by its architecture. The decorative arts is reminiscent ornamentation techniques of Islamic, Coptic and Pharaonic civilizations. The Houses of the Nile collection displayed silver brooches, bracelets, pendants, earrings, rings and decorative buttons.

Some of the pieces especially the rings, the bracelets and the pendants bear Arab calligraphy. No two pieces of the Pharaonic inspired work are ever the same, though a design or style might be repeated.

Fahmy, the Egyptian Silver-smith, produces high quality jewelry for the rich and the famous from a backstreet workshop in Cairo combining Arab and Western traditions.

Her creative visions help her to transform the shapes and motifs of traditional Middle Eastern culture into jewelry that were at once modern and traditional. "I try to go back to my background as an Egyptian, African and Arab and



above all as a woman. This had influenced on my creation," Fahmy says.

The artist was educated at the London Polytechnic in metal work that involved casting, engraving, enamelling and silversmithing in 1978. Before then she had obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with honours in Interior Design in 1973. She has the largest jewelry workshop in Egypt with 50 full-time employees.

She has an endless list of private clients which include Her Majesty Queen Nor, members of the Saudi Royal Family, Mrs. Daniel Mitterrand, the former first lady of France, Mrs. Susan Mubarak, first lady of Egypt, and

the Kuwaiti Royal family etc.

She has organized previous exhibitions among them are at the Frankfurt Fair 'Summer/Winter' beginning from 1994 and every year since, '3 women, 3 Crafts, 3 days' at the British Council, Cairo 1995, and an exhibition at the Theatre of El Madina, a fashion show and jewelry in Beirut in 1996.

Fahmy, through painstaking and intricate work, has profited and made an art form out of an industry dominated by men. Her Houses of the Nile collection exhibited in Jordan opened the doors to Jordanians to admire the exquisite and finely crafted jewelry. ■



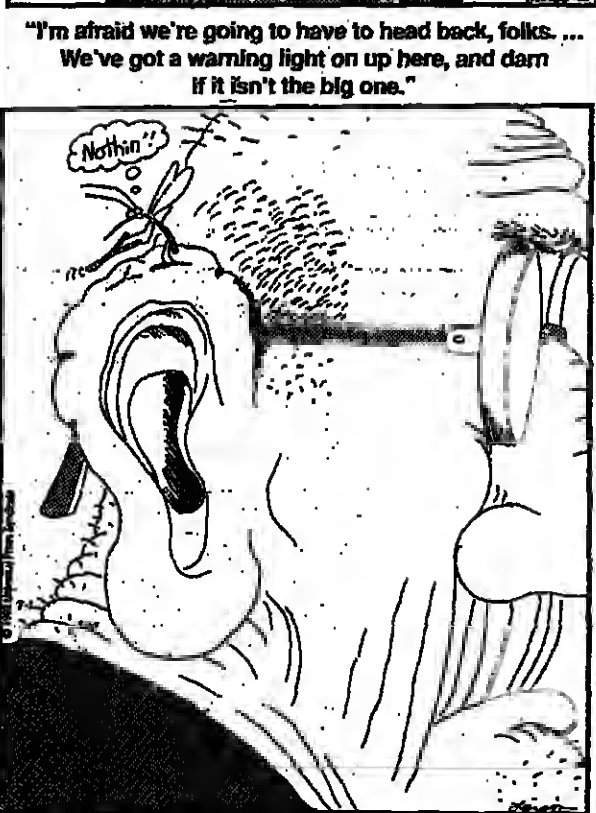
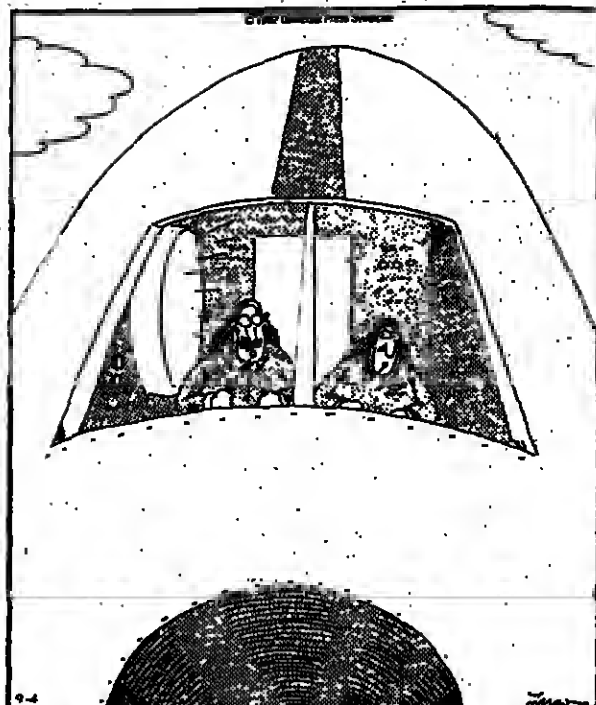
Azza Fahmy

THE FAR SIDE

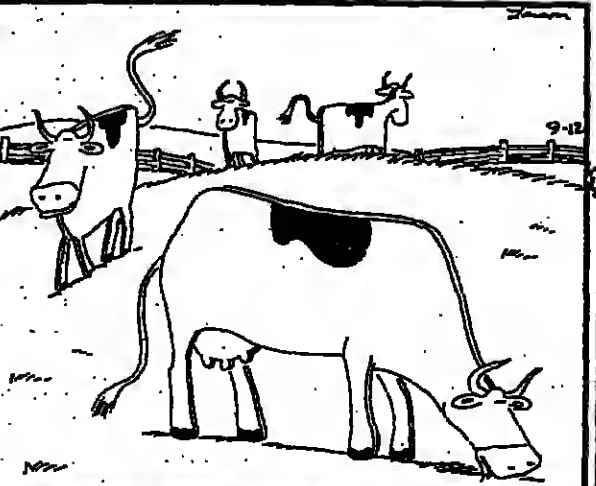
By GARY LARSON



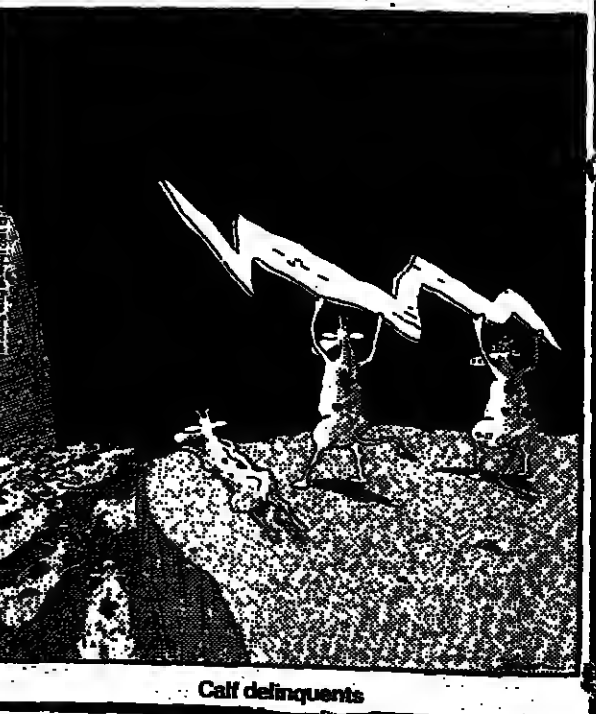
At Slow Cheetahs Anonymous



Insect witching rods



Where "minute" steaks come from



Calf delinquents

Cherish

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 31 January — 6 February

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Twinkle
2:30—French Programs
5:00—NBA Games
6:00—Neighbors
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—You Bet Your Life
7:00—News in French
7:35—Perspective
8:00—Cinema Cinema
8:30—Prison
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *Born to be Sold*
12:00—Country Music

SUNDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Pink Panther
2:15—Johnny Quest
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Energy Express
5:30—Tarran
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—America's Funniest People
7:00—News in French
7:35—Black Hat Chef
8:00—Daddy's Army
8:30—Killing for a Living
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—North & South
11:10—Jewel in the Crown

MONDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Hammerman
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Riding High
5:30—Animal Show
6:00—Neighbors
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—Hope & Gloria
7:00—News in French

TUESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Sandocan
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Skipper
5:30—Square One TV
6:00—Gillette Sports
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—A Whole New Ball
7:00—News in French

WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Johnny Quest
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Border Town
5:30—The Finder
6:00—Neighbors
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—Step by Step

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—My Little Fairy Tale
2:30—French Programs
5:00—NBA Games
6:00—Prince & The Pauper
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—Big Brother Jake
7:00—News in French
7:35—Black Hat Chef
8:00—Over A Cup of Tea
8:30—Lols & Clark
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *Thicker than Blood*
12:00—Music Show

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Ruppin
2:30—French Programs
5:00—Wishbone
5:30—Metro Café
6:30—News Headlines
6:35—Small Talk
7:00—News in French
7:15—Ramadan Tales
7:35—Life on the Internet
8:00—Friends
8:30—Brisco County
9:10—Knife to the Heart
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Streets of Larido
11:30—Feature Film

Programs are subject to change by JTV

Amman cinemas

- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Romeo * Juliet
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Jack
- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): 007... Tomorrow Never Dies
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): Pinocchio / The Peacemaker
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Elwi in the (Destiny)
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Riding High
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Mr. Bean



Renegade, Sunday at 9:10 pm

7:00—News in French
7:35—Nature of Thing
8:00—The Upper Hand
8:30—Challenges
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—A Woman of Independent Means
11:15—Country Music

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS SAMEDI

14:30—Bêtes pas Bêtes
14:45—Extra large
15:00—Cajou
16:00—Magazine
L'Unité de Colomb

DIMANCHE

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Magazine
Fait pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Le retour de France

LUNDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique
Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Savoir plus santé
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Têtes chercheuses

MERCREDI

16:30—Conan l'aventurier
17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

JEUDI

15:00—L'invité de Marque
15:30—Étonnant et drôle
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

VENDREDI

15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Les trois frères
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allé la Terre

MUSIC

Out of prison, Rick James is ready to return as King of Funk

By Kevin Merida

RICK JAMES used to be a flamboyant king in the funk universe. But the king was dethroned long ago, and now he's looking for a new place to sit.

Starting over again, at age 49, James has transformed himself into a kind of urban philosopher, eager to expound on his wild ride through life: The music. The fame. The drugs. The sex. The crimes. The imprisonment. The rebirth.

It's part of his master plan for a master comeback. He recently concluded a 25-city tour in which he entertained hip-shaking audiences with the same raunchy, rebellious "punk-funk" he pioneered in the late 1970s and early '80s. Hits such as "Super Freak," "Give It to Me Baby" and "Mary Jane."

He has reunited with his Stone City Band and JoJo McDuffie-Funderburg, lead singer of the now-defunct Mary Jane Girls, whom James created in his heyday. He has a new CD, "Urban Rhapsody"—a so-so work even by his own admission—that nonetheless suffices as his reintroduction to the public. His memoir, *Confessions of a Super Freak*, awaits a publisher. VHI is doing a documentary on his rise and crash. On Christmas Eve he married his longtime girlfriend, Tanya Hijazi, and they live with their five-year-old son in a new home in Los Angeles. James wants "to be the best father I can be" and to lecture to schoolchildren about drug abuse.

He wants to act in movies and record more CDs and produce other acts. Rick James wants to blow up again.

"There's so much I can do now," he says, "because I'm not hiding in the morning. I'm not paranoid, running around, up three, four weeks out of my mind, calling drug dealers all night... I got this big picture window and overhead all I see is mountains when I wake up. And the sunshine. It's a groove to me, 'cause I'm not used to that... My life has changed in so many ways. God has blessed me again."

During his golden years, James had the hot groove, but his life was a mess. He came to epitomize the excesses of the music world, adopting the same get-high, get-sexed lifestyle that many of his songs glorified. And then a career that already was faltering flat-out collapsed.

On 13 September 1993, the Grammy Award winner was convicted of assaulting

and imprisoning a woman at a swank West Hollywood hotel. He was sentenced to 5 years 4 months in prison, but jurors either deadlocked or acquitted James on more serious charges that could have landed him in prison for life.

The judge called the shorter sentence "a gift." James quickly turned into a joke on the talk-show and comedy-club circuits. He ended up serving two years in California's Folsom State Prison and was paroled on 2 August 1996.

Today, he joins a long list of old-school R&B performers who have returned to the stage: Cameo, the Bar-Kays, Graham Central Station, Lakeside, the Gap Band, George Clinton and the P-Funk All-Stars. Together they are leading a funk renaissance.

"Rick James might have been the icing on the cake," says Rickey Vincent, who teaches a course on protest music at San Francisco State University and is author of *Funk: The Music, the People and the Rhythm of the One*. "No one expected him to come back. I had my doubts. You never know what jail's going to do to someone, particularly someone who celebrated a carefree, irresponsible lifestyle." Then Vincent saw James' high-energy concert in Oakland, Calif.

"It was one of the best pieces of entertainment I've seen in years," Vincent says. "Rick is definitely back."

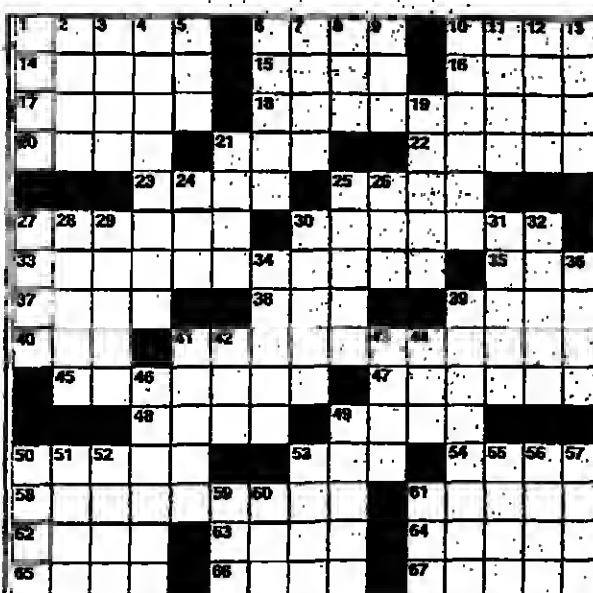
James is no longer the lean, toned performer he once was, though he still wears tight leather pants. A sizable paunch protrudes from his black velvet shirt. His boyish, clean-shaven face is much fuller now. He has brown braids that hang to his shoulders, and hands as beefy as an offensive tackle's. A bad hip limits his movement onstage; he will have surgery to replace it.

LA Times-Washington Post News Services



Rick James, ready to return as king of funk, performs at Constitution, photo by Dudley M. Brooks.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS
- 1 El Greco's birthplace
 - 6 USA word abbr.
 - 10 Soufflé
 - 14 Lured
 - 15 Composer Harold
 - 16 Charles
 - 17 Lamb
 - 18 Gold diggers' openings
 - 19 For sure
 - 20 Browning or Gray
 - 21 Write down neatly
 - 22 School paper
 - 23 Spiced pitcher
 - 25 Crime syndicate boss
 - 27 Actress North
 - 29 Of the morning
 - 33 Flighty
 - 35 Meadow
 - 37 Waterloo
 - 38 Hymenopter
 - 39 Wiggins
 - 40 Follow
 - 41 Prodigal
 - 45 Easy jobs
 - 46 Dried and
 - 47 Popular plays
 - 48 Article-length unit
 - 50 Reporter's advantage
 - 53 On Town
 - 54 Office cabinet
 - 56 Steuhs
 - 58 Stuck in mud
 - 60 Author James
 - 63 First name in mysteries
 - 64 Public display of
 - 65 tempo
 - 66 Cuddled condition
 - 68 Feel the absence of
 - 69 Family car
 - 70 Musical
 - 71 Pub orders
 - 72 Tower town
 - 73 Kind of chair or street
 - 74 Lukewarm
 - 75 Black
 - 76 Complex network
 - 78 Threatened
 - 79 Corroded
 - 79 Fake
 - 79 Ethiopian city
 - 79 Author Jung
 - 80 Apollo
 - 81 "and" verb
 - 82 Folliculous
 - 83 Helps in crime
 - 84 B.A. word
 - 85 Vile
 - 86 Overlooks
 - 87 Cat or snail
 - 88 SBI
 - 89 equipment
 - 90 Evil spell
 - 91 Completely
 - 92 Meditates
 - 93 Spurious
 - 94 Infatuation
 - 95 Pan
 - 96 Has debts
 - 97 Birds of prey
 - 98 Argued
 - 99 Home
 - 99 Eve's place
 - 99 Heavens in speech
 - 99 Oracle
 - 99 Author's words: abbr.

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun and moon are both in Capricorn. Capricorn is the sign of hard work in the beginning, and eventual success. For some it will be harder than for others.

Aries (March 21-April 19): Go along with a supervisor's demands. Arguments will fall on deaf ears. You can talk your friends into just about anything. Use your influence.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): A foreigner can lead you to your dreams. Follow one who knows where he or she is going. A difficult assignment has got you stymied.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): Money is the theme, especially money you share with other people. Make plans to cinch a deal. Travel to visit friends and be bold about what you want.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Partnership issues are important. You may have to let go of your old pictures to achieve your dreams. Once you choose somebody to work with, pool your resources.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Apply yourself fully to your work. Otherwise, there are bound to be problems. A shopping expedition goes well. It's easy to find just the right gift for a friend. More money comes in to your account, partially because you asked for it.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're lucky in love. If you don't have a sweetheart, go where people make things happen. You're always attracted to the entrepreneurial type. Your workload's demanding.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): You may be stuck at home for a couple of days. Even if you don't really have a cold, you can still use that excuse. There are things that you need to have done by now.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): You're sharp as a tack. You're learning so fast, you're surprising even yourself. Put what you've learned to good use. Fix something that's broken.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Keep an eye on your money and you can pull off a great deal. If you don't, it'll slip through your fingers.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You're absolutely magnificent. Start new projects and make bold statements about the future you're going to create. Do it responsibly, though, because you will make it happen. Figure out your finances.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your sense of grim foreboding is well justified. It's time for you to follow through on commitments previously made.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): You're having so much fun partying you hardly have time for anything else. So many friends, and you hate to disappoint any of them.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Define your dream and make it happen. Push yourself and achieve new status. Learn how to budget, and you'll never go without again.

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The harder I
work,
the luckier
I get!

SLAPSTIX
Don't look back
someone may be
gaining on you!

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TONIGHT

GALLERIA 1

GALLERIA 2

ROMEO X JULIET

JACK

2:00 / 6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30

2:00 / 6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30


<http://www.arabia.com/Star>

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star



Roger Garaudy, 84 ans, ancien protestant, ancien catholique, ancien communiste aujourd'hui converti à l'islam.

Selon que l'on se trouve à Amman ou à Paris, l'affaire Garaudy n'a absolument pas le même écho. Quelques lignes dans les journaux français à l'heure d'une actualité occupée par la révolte des chiémours. Un flot continu de commentaires et de réactions depuis le début du procès dans toute la presse arabe. En Jordanie, les éditorialistes, les caricaturistes voire les poètes s'en sont donné à cœur joie, parfois avec excès comme cette comparaison de la France à « une république khémiste » ou encore cette réflexion de Moh'd Mah'sneh dans le *Doustour* : « Le procès Garaudy est l'un des plus grands scandales de l'histoire comparables au procès de Jésus-Christ. Secrétaire

ou Galiléen ». Il est vrai que Jacques Vergès, l'un des avocats de Roger Garaudy, n'a pas hésité à dénoncer un « procès en sorcellerie ». Le philosophe français âgé de 84 ans était jugé pour contestation de crimes contre l'humanité en raison de son ouvrage *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* dans lequel il met en doute l'existence des chambres à gaz pour l'extermination des juifs. L'ancien protestant, converti au catholicisme puis au communisme et enfin à l'islam, se déclare un ennemi du sionisme. Cela le conduit à des considérations sur « l'impossibilité physique et chimique des chambres à gaz », sur « le lobby juif international » ou encore la « Shoah business » qui ne se

rait qu'une vaste opération de pub pour justifier la création de l'Etat d'Israël. A peu près tous les analystes et intellectuels du Moyen-Orient le suivent sur ce terrain hautement idéologique. Les douze partis politiques de l'opposition jordanienne ont ainsi publié un communiqué commun dans lequel ils condamnent les mensonges des sionistes sur l'extermination des juifs pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale « pour tromper le monde et faire chanter les gouvernements et les sociétés occidentales pour soutenir les complots sionistes contre l'humanité et le peuple palestinien ». Dans le même temps, une délégation des organisations de femmes jordanaises s'est rendue à l'ambassade de France à Amman pour exprimer leur soutien à Roger Garaudy. L'association des écrivains a même envoyé un mémorandum au président Jacques Chirac pour exiger l'arrêt du procès et a accordé au chercheur le titre de membre d'honneur de l'association.

Bref Roger Garaudy rejoint

L'avenir des enfants irakiens ne passe pas par l'école

« Le jeune Ralim se faufile entre les vieux taxis cabossés de la station d'autobus de Bagdad pour vendre des sucreries du matin au soir et n'a pas fréquenté l'école depuis six ans. « Qu'est-ce que je ferai quand je serai grand ? Je n'en sais rien. J'ai déjà grandi », dit Ralim, 13 ans, un parmi des milliers de gamins des rues qui doivent travailler en Irak pour aider leurs familles nombreuses. Ces gamins, qui cirent les chaussures ou vendent des cigarettes ou des mouchoirs en papier, peuvent facilement gagner plus que des diplômés d'université ou des fonctionnaires. Pourquoi donc se donner la peine d'étudier ? « Il n'y a personne dans ma famille qui puisse travailler donc je dois quitter l'école », explique Majed, un cirreur de chaussures qui ne sait pas lire. Il a cinq sœurs et son père est mort pendant la guerre contre l'Iran. Majed se fait payer 50 dinars irakiens (0,03 dollars) pour ses services. Le ministère de l'Education estime que plus d'un million d'enfants en âge d'être scolarisés, y compris ceux du Kurdistan qui échappent au pouvoir central, ont abandonné l'école, soit 20% du nombre total des écoliers qui devaient être inscrits pour l'année scolaire 1996-97. Alors que 93% des enfants irakiens fréquentaient l'école avant l'invasion du Koweït, la proportion est tombée à moins de 80%. Et même ceux qui y vont ne reçoivent plus le même niveau d'éducation qu'avant l'embargo sur l'Irak se targuant d'un niveau d'alphabétisation de 90%. Outre les pénuries de livres et de papiers, les classes sont surpeuplées et les enseignants jettent l'éponge. Près de 30.000 d'entre eux ont abandonné la profession en 1996 à la recherche d'un emploi mieux rémunéré. « Notre problème a beaucoup d'aspects mais en premier lieu il faut se débarrasser des sanctions pour exporter du pétrole à notre guise », déclare-t-on au ministère de l'Education.

Toute la rédaction du Jourdain vous souhaite une bonne fête de l'Aid Al-Fitr. Pas d'édition la semaine prochaine. Retrouvez-nous le 12 février. 'Aid Moubarak !

Nouvelles du Pays

Justice

Garaudy, antisémite en France, héros ici

Le philosophe est poursuivi en justice pour avoir mis en doute l'existence des chambres à gaz dans l'un de ses ouvrages. Alors qu'en France, l'affaire est passée complètement inaperçue, dans le monde arabe et notamment en Jordanie, les intellectuels et les partis politiques se sont mobilisés pour condamner un procès (1) qui, selon eux, bafoue la liberté d'expression.

Les bataillons de la cause palestinienne. Ses travaux sont-ils politisés ? Fakhr Kavar, le président de l'association des écrivains, insiste au contraire sur « la neutralité » et « l'objectivité » des thèses développées. Pourtant il reconnaît qu'elles « s'inscrivent » à l'antidote politique du monde arabe par rapport à la situation des Palestiniens.

« Le grand bluff »

Pendant le procès, les témoins cités par la défense ont reconnu que Garaudy était peut-être allé trop loin sur les chambres à gaz, l'un d'eux affirmant même avoir « l'impression de leur existence ». Fakhr Kavar, l'un des plus fervents défenseurs de Garaudy en Jordanie, estime pour sa part que « les chiffres de l'holocauste peuvent être revus et corrigés » et que « Garaudy a le droit de chercher pour dire la vérité », mais il nuance aussitôt « on ne nous a pas représenté pour lui la vérité ».

Le philosophe français était en outre accusé de diffamation

à caractère racial et de provocation à la haine ou à la violence contre un groupe de personnes en raison de leur race ou de leur religion. A ce propos, Jacques Tamer, chercheur du CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) a expliqué à la barre les dangers du négationnisme : « Dire que les chambres à gaz n'existent pas, c'est dire que les juifs sont les auteurs du plus grand bluff de l'histoire, donc les plus grands escrocs du monde. C'est bien une invitation à la haine et à la violence, ce n'est pas un discours d'opinion ». C'est sans doute sur ce point que logique arabe et logique occidentale divergent le plus. Du côté français, on juge les travaux de Garaudy selon le droit et en vertu d'une loi (loi Gayssot de 1990) que Jacques Vergès n'a d'ailleurs pas hésité à qualifier de « stérile ».

Bien entendu, les intellectuels arabes ne peuvent recevoir cet argument et ne jugent l'affaire Garaudy qu'en fonction du problème palestinien. Les propos du vieil homme sont légitimes, non seulement

parce que, selon ses défenseurs, ils s'appuient sur une démonstration scientifique mais aussi et surtout parce qu'ils rejoignent le droit légal du peuple palestinien à retourner sur ses terres. Que Garaudy incite à la haine ou à la violence contre les juifs n'est qu'une conséquence facultative, puisque de toute façon, dans l'esprit de la plupart des pays arabes, les opprimés sont les Palestiniens.

Reste qu'en France, les thèses de Garaudy ne sont pas éloignées de celles du Front national, le parti de l'extrême droite. Pour Jacques Tamer, l'antisémitisme procède « d'une attraction morbide pour la transgression » qui seule peut expliquer que « des pôles aussi divers que l'ultra-gauche, l'extrême droite et le radicalisme islamiste s'y rassemblent ». Fakhr Kavar préfère parler pudiquement de « croisement ».

Le Jourdain

(1) Le jugement du procès sera rendu le 27 février.

C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Exposition

C'est au XIXème siècle que la bande dessinée devient autonome et adopte le support que nous lui connaissons : l'album imprimé. Après été sous domination américaine puis belge, la BD française fait preuve dans les années 1960 et 1970 d'une formidable créativité. Cette période coïncide avec l'émergence d'un mouvement bédéphile qui milite pour la reconnaissance d'un 9ème Art... Quelques bulles et planches pour vous présenter l'histoire de la bande dessinée en France. Au Centre culturel français du 1er au 26 février. Renseignements au 637009.

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Éric Rohmer. Le beau mariage (1982), sous-titré en arabe. Sabine, vendeuse dans un magasin d'antiquités au Mans, étudie l'histoire de l'art à Paris. Elle rompt avec son ami, un peintre, espérant épouser un brillant avocat. Lundi 2 février à 18h30 et 20h30 au CCF. *Pauline à la plage* (1983), sous-titré en arabe. Deux cousines passent ensemble leurs vacances en Normandie. L'une est étudiante, l'autre, en instance de divorce. Lundi 9 février à 18h30 et 20h30 au CCF.

Culture

Regain de castagnettes

La culture hispanique connaît actuellement un bel engouement auprès des jeunes Jordaniens. Gastronomie, musique, danse... ils retrouvent ainsi la trace de la domination historique du monde arabe.

Les Jordaniens, depuis deux ou trois ans, se sont découverts des affinités avec la culture hispanique. Sans que l'on explique vraiment pourquoi, ils sont de plus en plus nombreux à vouloir apprendre l'espagnol. « L'espagnol est la quatrième langue dans le monde par le nombre de gens qui la parlent et la deuxième par son usage. C'est une langue universelle qui donne l'opportunité de connaître une culture très variée », défend fièrement Lola Fernandez, directrice du Centre Cervantes à Amman, qui propose outre des cours de langue, plusieurs activités culturelles. Fin 97, le centre avait collaboré à la mise en œuvre d'une exposition des plus grands peintres catalans à la Galerie nationale de Jordanie : Picasso, Miró, Dalí entre autres. Le nombre d'étudiants a augmenté de près de 20% par rapport à l'année dernière. « Étudier une autre langue me donne l'opportunité de voyager mentalement et de connaître beaucoup de choses. C'est s'ouvrir une fenêtre sur la réalité d'une autre culture », raconte une étudiante jordanienne en espagnol, tenant sous son bras un livre de Gabriel Garcia Marquez, écrivain colombien. Prix Nobel de littérature en 1982.

Les nourritures spirituelles ne sont pas seules à profiter des effluves ibériques. La gastronomie en a pris une louche aussi. Les restaurants de cuisine espagnole ou d'Amérique latine se multiplient : Bonita, Latinos, Mama Juanita, Humphrey's... Commander des tacos, de la paëlla ou des enchiladas... ce n'est pas un problème d'autant que les Jordaniens sont des gourmets et aiment varier les plaisirs. « Le goût est totalement différent de notre cuisine », se délecte Natcha, une jeune jordanienne. Bien entendu, ces repas s'accompagnent de musiques latines répétées chaque jour par la radio du pays. Certains parlent même d'y créer une émission régulière consacrée aux rythmes hispaniques. Dans les quelques pubs et boîtes d'Amman, les discs-jockeys passent fréquemment ce type de musique et au-delà des incolores Gipsy King certains airs sont devenus populaires et écoutés partout :

Maria de Ricky Martin, un chanteur de Porto Rico ou *Mi tierra* de Gloria Stephan, une américaine d'origine cubaine. Le tableau ne serait pas complet sans la danse qui ne se limite pas au flamenco. **Salsa endiablée** « Nous avons des rythmes très différents, une variété impressionnante », explique Gitano (notre photo) professeur vénézuélien de tango, samba et autres rumba. Ses cours ne désemplissent pas. Trois fois par semaine, pendant une heure, 35 à 40 jeunes gens viennent s'essayer aux déhanchements endiablés de la salsa ou de la merengue. Gitano propose même des cours privés pour les plus motivés. Une cinquantaine de femmes hispaniques présentes sur le sol jordanien se sont réunies et tiennent de relayer cette vague par une série d'activités : théâtre, conférences, journal d'information en espagnol... Les mariages mixtes sont aussi l'une des marques de l'influence hispanique en Jordanie. La plupart des femmes qui viennent d'Espagne (plus de 300), de Colombie (environ 350), de Cuba (plus de 75) ou d'autres

pays d'Amérique latine sont mariées à des Jordaniens et introduisent leur culture dans les foyers du royaume (cuisine, langue, croyance, traditions...). Les affinités avec la culture latine ne datent pas d'hier, puisque les Arabes ont occupé une partie de l'Espagne pendant près de cinq siècles (VIIIe au XIIIe). De cette occupation est né un style architectural : le *Mudejar*, que l'on retrouve souvent dans les églises d'Amérique latine, dans la chapelle royale de Cholula à Mexico ou de manière plus étonnante dans la mosquée de Cordoba et le palais de l'Alhambra à Grenade en Andalousie. Enfin, n'oublions pas que l'arabe a largement influencé la langue espagnole. Plus de 5000 mots ont gardé un souvenir de l'arabe, notamment tous ceux qui portent le préfixe « al- », comme l'alcoha (ruban arabe, chambre en français) ou l'almoahada (mihadda, oreiller).

La Jordanie renoue en quelques sortes avec l'histoire du monde arabe et son influence pendant plus de 400 ans sur l'Espagne. ■

Amineh Ishtay



« Des menteurs, »

même si les astrologues se révèlent honnêtes. Dans le Coran, Dieu nous met en garde contre les mensonges des devins. L'astrologie comme toute autre forme de prédiction est rejetée par la religion. Impossible pour elle de revendiquer une quelconque légitimité scientifique. Néanmoins parmi les Jordaniens, quel que soit leur niveau social, la voyance gagne du terrain. Pourtant, l'astrologie est depuis toujours connotée négativement. Mais aujourd'hui, la perte de foi, la crise économique et le malaise ambiant se conjuguent pour rendre les gens plus réceptifs aux messages illusoire des pythoïsses. Une nouvelle diseuse de bonne aventure qui apparaît sur le marché de la prédiction n'a aucune difficulté pour se constituer une clientèle fidèle. En Jordanie, la loi interdit une telle activité. A priori, une voyante peut être arrêtée et conduite en prison. Mais elle sera rapidement relâchée car les gens ne portent pas plainte contre les devineresses. La justice ne peut donc engager de poursuites.

Vérité à 80%

« Je sais bien qu'elles nous racontent des histoires », souligne Miran, mais en va les voir quand même pour des raisons banales, surtout pour tirer le « temps libre ». Puis la jeune femme raconte son expérience étonnante : « Personnellement, j'y vais une fois tous les trois mois. La plus connue en ce moment s'appelle Ibtisam, une Jordanienne de 16 ans qui habite dans le camp palestinien de Baqqa. Elle est capable de parler 11 heures d'affilée. Je n'exagère pas si je dis que par jour, elle gagne 100 dinars, parfois plus. Dans une heure, elle voit au moins deux personnes, à un dinar la vision. Les femmes les plus riches de notre société viennent la voir. Généralement, elle nous parle de notre proche avenir mais je ne lui fais pas confiance, même si dans tout ce qu'elle dit, il peut y avoir 30% de vrai en tenant compte du hasard dans ses prédictions ». En réalité, les voyantes savent à qui elles ont à faire. Elles jouent sur la psychologie et connaissent les préoccupations essentielles des jeunes filles de 20-25 ans : la vie professionnelle, les études, le mariage etc... Il leur suffit d'observer les réactions de la cliente sur tel ou tel sujet, d'avoir une bonne mémoire pour orienter la prédiction sur les bons rails. Si les moyens changent (cartes, chiffres, paume de la main, marc de café...), « ce sont souvent les mêmes histoires qui se répètent », reconnaît Amami qui rendait visite à une devineresse irakienne, aujourd'hui partie au



Même le capitaine Haddock cède à l'irrésistible envie de connaître son avenir. Qu'elles lisent les lignes de la main ou les cartes, les diseuses de bonne aventure répètent souvent les mêmes histoires.

Canada. « Elle était un peu plus précise qu'Ibtisam. Elle disait la vérité à 80%. Tant et si bien qu'elle fréquentait le Palais Royal en tant que « cuisinière ». Elle prenait aussi plus cher, 4 dinars par personne mais pour une durée illimitée. Mais la voyante la plus prestigieuse de toutes est une française mariée à un Jordanien. Son emploi de temps est très chargé et il faut souvent attendre deux ou trois semaines avant d'obtenir un rendez-vous. Ses « consultations » sont aussi beaucoup plus chères : 10 dinars la prédiction. Faut-il la croire ? Difficile à dire car la

plupart du temps, elle devine un futur éloigné en utilisant des chiffres, les dates de naissance et les signes du zodiaque.

« Signé Tarek ! » Les femmes sort, semble-t-il, les plus sensibles aux propos de ces « magiciennes » du destin car elles savent redonner l'espoir surtout quand il s'agit d'un sujet aussi sensible que le mariage : « Je me souviens avoir été confrontée à une situation prédictée par la voyante, raconte Manal, elle m'a dit que j'allais rencontrer un homme appelé Tarek. L'après-midi en sortant de l'université, j'ai

trouvé une carte de visite sur le pare-brise de ma voiture, signée par un Tarek... ». Les femmes déjà mariées attendent d'abord d'être rassurées sur la fidélité de leur mari et l'avenir de leurs enfants. Rajwa a ainsi eu la mauvaise surprise d'apprendre le prochain mariage de son mari avec une infirmière par la bouche d'Ibtisam. Mais d'autres sujets plus quotidiens sont abordés, comme l'histoire de Ritam, une femme au foyer : « Je me suis réveillée un matin et mes bijoux avaient disparu. Après avoir consulté une voyante, j'ai découvert plus tard qu'elle avait dit vrai. Le voleur n'était autre que ma voisine que je prenais pour ma meilleure amie ! ». « Ces choses-là, ajoute-t-elle, vous poussent à aller voir les astrologues de temps en temps même si elles ne racontent que des mensonges... ».

Magie de « cheikh »

Le plus frappant, c'est que ces diseuses de bonne aventure s'adressent uniquement aux femmes. Les hommes ne sont pas admis à constater le mystère de la prédiction. Ils doivent attendre à l'extérieur de la pièce en buvant un thé et une femme est chargée de faire l'intermédiaire entre lui et la voyante. Pour quelle raison ? Encore un autre secret. A côté de ces voyantes palestiniennes, les gens se réfugient également auprès de « cheikhs » charismatiques tout aussi rejetés par les instances religieuses officielles mais qui ont un fort impact sur la population car ils prétendent être en liaison directe avec Dieu. On les consulte quand un membre de la famille est gravement malade ou quand on souhaite améliorer son niveau de vie. Ils consacrent à la demande des sortes d'amulettes, des *Rijab*, mélange d'épices et de versets coraniques écrits trempés dans un tissu, qu'il faut ensuite porter sur soi. S'ils refusent de jeter des mauvais sorts et ne s'occupent que d'améliorer le cours de nos pauvres vies, la limite entre la superstition et la religion est ici très floue. ■

Rana Kavar-Bagreen

مناشدة

Fashion

The show must go on but the audience is elsewhere

WHEN TONY Blair declared that the British Labour party had to "modernize or die", he perhaps little realized how many areas of life his words applied to. Haute couture, an industry founded on a way of life belonging to the last century, is now undergoing coexistence changes. These will either signal its death throes or the birth pangs of a new craft ready for the 21st century.

In spite of the beautiful clothes in this week's shows, many believe that couture now exists only for making headlines; they say an industry where shows can cost £1 million each to serve 3,000 people is unviable. The truth is both more complex and hazy.

The first myth to explode is that of the mysterious 3,000 the supposed world total of women with the money, time and inclination to buy couture. An industry employing, including those indirectly involved, around 50,000 people to service so few cannot exist unless it is about perfume and publicity.

But Catherine Riviere, head of haute couture at Christian Dior, which is riding high under the artistic direction of John Galiano, says the number of serious clients is no more than 500.

Giancarlo Giammetti of Valentino goes further. "The number who buy a couture wardrobe of seven or eight dresses a season, who do not buy the samples or borrow dresses, is probably no more than 70."

Most of the women who make up Riviere's total, he says, are "people who now have the money to buy couture for a particular occasion though there are only about 10 such major global events per year."

Beyond that are the dresses lent each season to actresses and celebrities with model-sized figures. They are a publicity lifeline because, as Giammetti says, "It is great to have big young actresses like

Cameron Diaz and Ashley Judd showing that couture is not just for older women."

Stars are wooed to wear borrowed frocks and take front row seats at shows. Dior's Bernard Danillon says: "The front row is a mix of genuine clients and stars. The exposure that personalities get is important but we concentrate on people who already support the house by buying ready-to-wear or a couture sample."

The genuine client's value is higher, but most of these 500 women do not attend the shows. These days, couture houses operate as much by video and flying fitters as by shows and salon fittings. There, says Beatrice Gorse of Nina Ricci, "little house loyalty now. A woman will order several videos and pick dresses here and there." After seeing the videos, good customers may, says Giammetti, "have up to 20 outfits flown for selection, often in their private plane."

Such a lifestyle destroys another myth that when an economy such as south-east Asia sneezes, couture catches a cold. "Our core clientele is virtually insulated from economic hiccups," says Baronne Helene de Lidinghausen, haute couture director at Yves St Laurent, which is owned by Sanofi and probably turns out the most clothes.

She says reliable customers are at a level where "money reserves rarely depend on day-to-day fluctuations. The new rich are few by comparison, not enough to matter if they stop coming. Fifty per cent of our market is European and stable."

South-east Asia is still a small couture market. It makes up only 10 per cent of Dior's clientele against 40 per cent in the US, 20 per cent in Europe and 30 per cent from the Middle East.

The perception that most clients are the wives, daughters or mistresses of rich men has some truth. There are new adherents, of whom the three stunningly well-

married Miller duty-free heiresses are the most visible. There are a few French politicians' wives though the French market is now small and the wives of international captains of industry.

But an increasing proportion are international businesswomen typically buying at classic houses such as Chanel and Yves St Laurent. Dior has clients such as the Argentinian cement magnate who took over and expanded her husband's business when he died.

These women also like the "semi-couture" system initiated by younger designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, Thierry Mugler and former Givenchy assistant designer Dominique Siro. Siro fits once and charges between £3,000 and £5,000, a bargain when compared with the £20,000 price tag of a standard Dior couture dress.

As the total number of customers is minuscule, what else are the shows for? The obvious answer is publicity and perfume, but that is only half the story. Saleable clothes especially in relation to perfume promotion are needed, too. Nina Ricci was recently sold to the Spanish family firm of Puig, which already distributes its perfumes.

Paris gossip has it that Ricci's designer, Gerard Pipart, will be replaced within a year, possibly by American designer Carolina Herrera, whose perfumes Puig also distributes and whose friend Oscar de la Renta has much improved the couture status of the pre viously rudderless Balmain.

Givenchy is another interesting case. Rumours suggest disastrous sales for young Briton Alexander McQueen's first two couture collections, due to his uncompromising ideas and truculent attitude. But according to Givenchy's British director Peter Norman, his ready-to-wear has sold far better than Galiano's before him. This overturns another couture maxim,

that houses will now employ any notorious designer for the sake of headlines. That Galiano should have stumbled at tailored Givenchy and yet he such a hit at more romantic Dior shows it is a matter of horses for courses.

Norman says the couture gives "Givenchy perfumes their premier image compared with heavily marketed American competitors". Givenchy can ill afford another couture failure because in June it has a perfume launch. Perhaps pressure was brought to bear on McQueen, but his spring collection was a display of wearable Oriental delicacy that delighted its audience.

Promoting ready-to-wear is important. This is the real money-spinner even if it is more subject to market forces.

Couture makes up less than four per cent of Valentino's \$1 billion annual sales, of which clothes account for 86 per cent. Dior, which has the second-largest couture workroom in Paris, claims 25 sales in the few days since the show, which McQueen dedicated ironically some may feel "to the client". If he has become house-trained, Givenchy will be there is also the design experiment side and its spin-off, internal promotions. Many "clients" at the show are the house's trading partners, licensees, shop franchisees, fabric suppliers and so on for whom, says Giammetti, "it is important to see what the designer's spirit is." It is also an elegant pat on the back.

Among couture's multifarious purposes, the client has made a surprising return. McQueen was not the only designer to make an effort to show both wearability and fine workmanship. Both Valentino and Chanel showed in their Paris headquarters, where clients could see close up the fine detail of pin tucks, pleated edgings, tiny beads and delicate embroidery. Dior took the broader sweep in the magnificent Opera Garnier, but still



showed virtuoso detailing on a grand scale.

All of this is needed if a leaner, fitter couture is to survive into the 21st century. Redundancies indicate that only those bolstered by hefty ready-to-wear and perfume sales will survive, along perhaps with the semi-couturiers at their more modest level.

Pierre Berge at Yves St Laurent still believes couture has no future, but his colleague Helene de Lidinghausen disagrees. "The very top of the market will always exist," she says. "Even if it has to reform and come back under another name."

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Chamber of Theater

THE STAR'S WORKING COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Back to information searching basics

SEARCH ENGINES on the Internet are becoming increasingly important and relevant when it comes to finding reliable, good quality information on the Web.

Although search engines are widely used on the Internet, most users have not had any specific information training. If you are a librarian or an information professional then it is highly likely that you will have had some kind of formal training in how to search for information, and have some knowledge of the inconsistencies therein. If you are not, then it is likely that you have never needed to worry about the inherent problems associated with information.

Search for concepts

It is vital to think about the concepts or subjects relating to what you want to retrieve. You then have to find words which represent these subjects—these are your 'search terms' or 'keywords'. You may think you already know these before going ahead, but even information professionals who use information systems on a daily basis still often plan out a search on paper, before connecting to an on-line system. This allows them to concentrate on the most important concepts of their search without the added stress of wasting time or money. Of course the professional systems they use are expensive, but

likewise if you spend a long time searching on the Web then you must remember that your time is money.



Synonyms

What you must also think about are other words which mean the same thing as your first search terms. These synonyms are very important—the person who created the web site that you are looking for has probably chosen different words to describe its content than you would have done were you doing their job. Therefore you need to second-guess what words that other persons will have used to describe their site.

Subconscious knowledge Another problem is subconscious knowledge—that which we don't know we already know. For example, let's say I am looking for details

about Jordan on the Web. Most people would know that I am talking about the Country. However, a search engine doesn't have this extra information, and so if you simply searched for the word 'Jordan' then you may also get information about Michael Jordan and any other name that contains Jordan.

What you want — and what you don't

As a result, you must not only think about what you do want, but also what you don't want. This can often cause problems if, for instance, you decide to use a facility which a lot of search engines offer: namely the ability to tell the engine that you don't want to see links to sites which contain a particular word or phrase. This is done by placing a minus sign in front of those words. In summary therefore, you can save a lot of

time searching if, before you connect to the Web, you concentrate on exactly what it is that you really want. Then identify suitable search terms and synonyms, think about the sub-conscious knowledge you already have about the subject, and also give some thought to what it is that you don't want.

AS PART of its commitment

to better serving the Middle East, First International Computer (FIC) has opened a regional office in Dubai, headed by Mr. Hassan Al Ashi—previously the general manager of Al Ra'ed Al Arahii Corp., the Jordan dealers for FIC products. The move comes at a time when FIC is witnessing growth in demand for its popular LEO

PC brand across the region, and as the company introduces a line of scanners. FIC is the largest supplier of motherboards worldwide and is a pioneer in adopting new

technologies in the field of motherboards. FIC supplies most of the major PC manufacturers around in the USA, Europe and the Far East.

Quoted from the new Internet Newsletter Jim, mail@midcasttravelnet.com

Internet Search Engines

- Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>)—particularly good for company web sites
- Infoseek (<http://www.infoseek.com>)—a great search tool
- Metacrawler (<http://www.metacrawler.com>)—combines searches from 6 other search tools
- HotBot (<http://www.hotbot.com>)—great search tool, shows about the day-glow colours
- Altavista (<http://altavista.digital.com>)—very fast and one of the most popular
- Excite (<http://www.excite.com>)—try the regional/country versions for country specific information.

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